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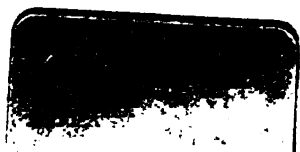
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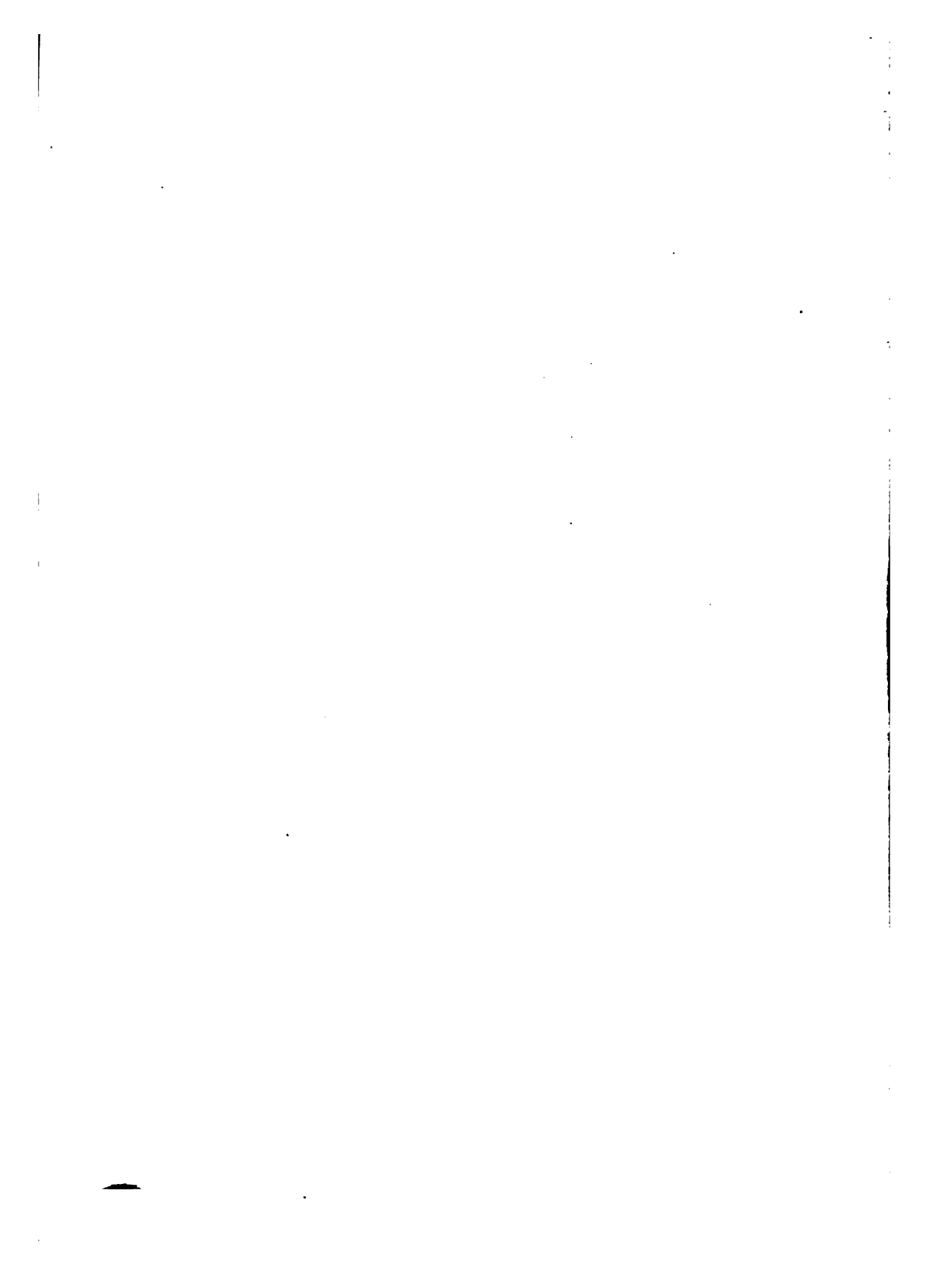
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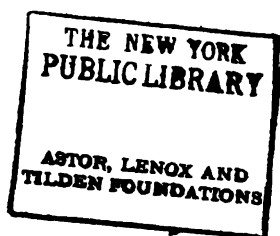
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**LIFE AND LETTERS**  
**OF**  
**GEORGE JACOB HOLYOAKE**







GEORGE JACOB HOLYOAKE.

(1862.)

AND LETTERS

OF

JACOB HOLVOETE

APPENDIX

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LIFE AND LETTERS  
OF  
GEORGE JACOB HOLYOAKE

**OF**

**BY**

**JOSEPH McCABE**

**AUTHOR OF "PETER ABÉLARD," "TALLEYRAND," ETC.**

VOL. II

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# LIFE AND LETTERS OF GEORGE JACOB HOLYOAKE

## CHAPTER XVI

### NEARING WESTMINSTER

THE first half of Holyoake's public life was, like the first half of the nation's life in the nineteenth century, necessarily tentative in many important respects. He was an articulate part of the new national spirit. His boyish eyes had opened upon a world that had not fully emerged from the chrysalis-stage of feudalism, but was stirred with the deep, vague instinct of advancing to a brighter and freer existence. It was still swathed in a hundred bonds, and its bursting vitality angrily strained against them. But intellectual instinct, or instinct touched with intelligence, has not the sure march of the animal's unconscious impulse. Vision sees many possible paths where the blind have no choice. The aspiring mind of the worker, which Holyoake expressed, broke along many courses that led only to failure and disappointment. The vast energies and rude heroisms that the first vision of reform had inspired passed into forms that the historian must dismiss as futile.

Holyoake, peculiarly sensitive to the larger movements of his class and age, followed or accompanied the erratic pioneers, but was young enough to find himself the wiser and stronger at each failure. It is always

something to learn for certain that a particular road is the wrong road. The name of "thinker" has been too jealously reserved for men who are successful in leaving the earth and mounting the ether toward the empyrean. It is a high quality of thought to discern the path amid social and political confusion. We saw that Holyoake had much of this quality. Cast amongst embittered rebels from the start, he nevertheless pleaded for cool judgment and sober action, and avoided the excesses of most of his colleagues in public agitation. His fiftieth year found him, not only in a position of distinction and influence, not only with a record of service that every social historian now commends, but in active leadership of two movements that he would never have to regret. One of these movements aimed at the rectification of speculative errors, the other at an improvement of industrial conditions. But he had always held that, for all purposes of the social pathologist, the heart of the nation beat at Westminster, and in his mature years his thoughts turned more and more to politics.

He has said somewhere, against those who urged an exclusive attention to social reform, that the true reformer must be ever alert to the chance of a politician arising any day who may lose a century's savings in a sea of imperial blood. That is a narrow expression of his feeling for political action, taking colour from passing events. In reality he had an extremely broad and high ideal of political life. As a Co-operator, he would, of course, keep industrial life apart from politics, except for a humane supervision. He shrank from the "State-Socialism" which was then being introduced into England from Germany, and remained always very hostile to it; though he did not follow its later modifications very closely. But he was as little in favour of Mill's ideal, competition, as the Socialists were, and would merely set

up a separate scheme of corporate or collective action—pure Co-operation—for industry and commerce. For all other reforms he looked to political life ; and, apart from considerations of utility, he urged upon the workers a sense of the manly dignity of sharing political power, and laboured for the discriminate extension of the franchise and the freeing of the political organism from its incrustation of medieval growths and parasites. We have traced the steps which brought him to this position. He discarded the futile terrors of the Chartists to try the opposite venture of wooing the enfranchised middle class in the interest of the workers. His own experience of them was encouraging. He met scores of professional and business men who felt keenly that the stunted and squalid life of the workers was a blot on the nation's honour.

The other interest that brought him within the parliamentary sphere—helped him to realise that Parliament was not a mere “talking shop”—was his sympathy with continental insurgents. To return for a moment to the fifties, we may recall how the attempt to blow up Napoleon in 1858 with bombs manufactured in England led to warm remonstrance on the part of the French Government. Lord Palmerston listened complacently to its appeal, and brought in a Conspiracy-to-Murder Bill. On the first reading it had 299 votes against 91. Just as it seemed in principle, the measure was dreaded by the foreign refugees and their friends. If the Bill passed, foreign rebels might at any time be officially described as “suspect” and driven from their one sure refuge in Europe.

Holyoake, Stansfeld, Ashurst, Shaen, and others, met in the Political Exchange at 147 Fleet Street—“the new Cato Street,” some called it—from whose windows so many defiant flags had waved, and formed an Anti-

Conspiracy Bill Committee. The little group of practised agitators had less than a week for the task of destroying Palmerston's huge majority, and they succeeded brilliantly! Holyoake was treasurer, and he made a vigorous appeal for funds. I find a letter to him from the distinguished Nonconformist, Samuel Morley, enclosing five pounds, but asking for the suppression of his name. With the funds he collected a few meetings were held, and London was quickly covered with a garment of striking placards, giving, especially, strong quotations from the aged Lord Russell. But it was probably enough to point out to London that the Government was "truckling to the foreigner," one of the seven deadly sins of English political ethics.

Before the end of the week all London was discussing the "French Colonels' Bill," as it was cleverly nicknamed. The work was the most triumphant piece of agitation in which Holyoake was ever engaged. Their first meeting was held on Monday, February 16th, and the vote on the second reading of the Bill was taken on the following Friday. Holyoake followed the debate from the Reporters' Gallery. Milner Gibson moved the rejection of the Bill, and it was soon seen that the angry waves that beat against the House from London and the country were felt appreciably within it. Gladstone and Peel made impassioned protests, and deadly jets of hostility continued to fall on Palmerston until two o'clock on the Saturday morning. On the division being taken at that hour, his majority of 208 had vanished, and the Bill was rejected by 234 votes to 215! The Government resigned the same day, but the agitation the Committee had raised was too powerful for them to control. They had announced a demonstration in the Park for the following Sunday, and, though they issued placards countermanding it, and the police opposed it, some 200,000



people burst into the Park and boisterously expressed their delight at the fall of Palmerston.

Holyoake has written a fine estimate of the statesman whom he had learned to hate in his youth, when he joined a secret society that whispered of assassination. He says he had for Palmerston "respect without sympathy." Palmerston had great personal generosity, and had shown a "diplomatic sympathy" with the aims of the continental reformers. His action in regard to the Garibaldi Legion will be remembered. He was a great foreign minister—"if pricked he would have bled dispatches"—and it could at least be said for him that foreign tyrants hated him. But in home affairs he was as *Punch* drew him—the man with a straw in his mouth. He expressed no hostility to reform, but he "had learned from Lord Melbourne the art of doing nothing," and "in his turn he impressed Disraeli with the advantage of gaiety in politics." He "did not know the world below his carriage steps," as Thornton Hunt, who knew him well, told Holyoake. In 1854 he visited Bradford, and Holyoake, whose *English Leader* was much read there, helped to defeat the attempt to force a welcome. Yet when Holyoake begged him to put Feargus O'Connor's sister on the Civil List, he regretted that there was no vacancy, and offered her £100 out of his own pocket; and when Hunt asked him to find a seat for Holyoake, he promised to do so—"he knew Mr. Holyoake would often vote against him," he said, "but at the same time he would find in him a fair adversary." But possibly Holyoake's respect for him was more closely connected with his telling the Glasgow authorities that they would do more to arrest the cholera by cleaning their city than by recommending a public fast.

The Orsini attempt had other sequels that interest us. The ethic of tyrannicide became a common topic of

discussion, and a Mr. Adams asked Holyoake to publish for him a pamphlet in defence of it. Holyoake refused, and it was published by Truelove. It was afterwards suggested that Holyoake shrank with some cowardice from the publication, and alleged that he was negotiating with Mazzini for a similar work. This is mere calumny. His real reasons were that the original title was objectionable, and that the author refused to put his name to the pamphlet. It was altered in both these respects before Truelove published it. On the other hand Holyoake exceeds a little in his references to Mazzini (*Bygones*, I, 226). He says that "only enemies of Mazzini sought to connect him with Orsini's plot." I have quoted letters in which T. Allsop speaks of Mazzini's approval of it; and I find a letter of Mazzini's in which he begs Holyoake to publish a translation of a pamphlet entitled *Tyrannie et Tyrannicide*, though the letter has no date.

Most of Holyoake's political friends held liberal views about tyrannicide in the days of Napoleon III. Cultivated men so dissimilar as T. Allsop, W. Savage Landor, and Percy Greg advocated it. Holyoake himself made a very plain defence of it even thirty years afterwards (*Sixty Years*, ch. lxvii).<sup>1</sup> It is summed up in the brief sentence: "In a *free* country tyrannicide is a worn-out theory." He points out that it is generally kings who have been the regicides of history. At the time, he published a series of "Tyrannicide Literature," which is quite enough to answer the charge of cowardice. Some of the pamphlets were old Royalist fragments. One of them was written by the revolutionary, Felix Pyat, and had already brought trouble on a previous publisher. A Pole, Stanislaus Tschorzewski, had published it in the

<sup>1</sup> Though Mr. Knowles was a warm friend of Holyoake's, and pressed him for contributions, he declined to publish this chapter, as an essay, in the *Nineteenth Century*. Even the *Newcastle Chronicle* declined it.

original French, and, though the sale must have been very meagre in this form, Napoleon's agents secured his arrest. One of the French spies sat beside the London magistrate during the trial. Holyoake was in Sheffield, and was very indignant when he read of the proceedings. He telegraphed to his brother to issue at once an English translation of the pamphlet, which Francis Newman described as "judicial." Holyoake sent the first copy to Lord Derby, who had just succeeded Palmerston, and politely invited him to prosecute, if he dared. Derby remembered too well the fate of his predecessor. No action was taken against Holyoake, and that made it necessary to abandon the prosecution of Tschorzewski. Meantime Truelove had been arrested for publishing Adams's pamphlet. As the list of subscribers to his defence included Francis Newman, J. S. Mill, W. Coningham, and other distinguished writers or public men, and a vigorous agitation was afoot, that prosecution also had to be abandoned.

In this circuitous way Holyoake was realising more truly the importance of Westminster. Co-operation in schemes of violence seemed to be the only remedy for social and political disorder abroad. In his own country there were constitutional paths to the goal of social reform ; and he had not merely to dissent from Chartist dreams of violence, but to lead his many followers into those paths. This is the task on which we find him chiefly engaged in the second half of his active career. The picture has less colour and romance than the earlier one. It is set in the sober and familiar frame of our parliamentary history ; nor can we now expect him to play the commanding part he has done in the smaller worlds of rebellious action. But what we have already seen of his character will prepare the reader to expect situations of interest, as Holyoake's flexible and

discriminating sense encounters the rigid divisions of party politics.

The great political problem of the sixties was a revival of that which had agitated England when Holyoake first learned the meaning of politics. The generation that had won the great Reform Bill of 1832 had almost passed away, and a new generation was knocking at the doors of Parliament. A fresh extension of the franchise was inevitable, and the national question was, whether peace could be bought by the small and complicated extension proposed by the Tories and the older Whigs, or the larger and simpler extension proposed by the new Liberals; or whether the Radicals and surviving Chartists could at last secure manhood suffrage. At once Holyoake faced the problem from a point of view that was peculiarly his own. He saw a lack of principle in Tory and Liberal proposals, and a lack of judgment in those of the extremists. For him the question was: How shall we adjust the abstract right of every adult to the vote with the patent incompetence of large numbers of them to exercise it with safety or profit to the country? His solution was characteristic, and was much discussed at the time. He first proposed it in a letter to the *Daily News* in 1858, which he then published as an open letter to Lord Russell, with the title *The Workman and the Suffrage*. Universal suffrage he felt to be "in the remote future," but he resented any form of "income-franchise." What was wanted, he said, was an "intelligence franchise." Applicants for the vote ought to submit to an examination in their fitness to exercise it properly. "Franchise Examiners" were to be sent to every town and large village twice a year, hold public examinations, that would be open to all adults (male and female), and give certificates entitling the successful candidate to a vote. For the subjects of study he

suggests "Political Economy and English Constitutional History."

The plan was singularly impracticable for so practical a man, but its ideal justice will not be questioned, and it was warmly approved by many thoughtful writers and politicians. The editor of the *Athenæum*, for instance, wrote to Holyoake :

"DEAR SIR,

"I have to thank you for the courteous manner in which you have introduced my name into an important letter written by you and inserted in the *Daily News*, on 'The workman and the suffrage.' The suggested character-franchise you judge would be objected to as the certificates would be issued by employers and 'betters.' I am aware how difficult it is to remove prejudice from the mind of a working man. I should, however, hope that if the option is presented to him thus easily to obtain what is so much desired, on reflection—and working men do reflect—the reluctance would be overcome, and thus many thousands who should be voters would possess the privilege. I like much your proposed educational examination. . . ."

Dr. Bird wrote to remind him that the Society of Arts already held periodical examinations of working men, and might, with some extension, serve his purpose. In March (1859) a much wider publicity was given to the scheme, when it was discussed by Lord Stanley (later Lord Derby) in the House. The passage, in what is described as "the finest speech he ever made" (during the debate on Disraeli's Reform Bill), runs :

"There are many members of this House, and many more of the working classes, who are familiar with the name of Mr. Holyoake. (Murmurs and 'Hear, hear.') He is chiefly known in connexion with philosophical speculations of an unpopular character, and also as warmly and earnestly sympathising with the cause of

democratic institutions in Europe. No one is a more fitting representative in that respect of the feelings of that section of the working class which interests itself most strongly in politics. (Cries of 'Oh, oh!') Mr. Holyoake may fairly be taken to represent the feelings of persons of extreme political opinions, and it is with his political opinions alone that I have to do. Well, what is it that Mr. Holyoake says in a pamphlet published within the last few weeks? . . . I agree with him in the general tenour of his remarks, and he fairly expresses the principle that I have endeavoured to establish—admission of the working classes by selection and not by mass.”<sup>1</sup>

Lord Stanley concluded tamely that the educational test was new and difficult, and passed on to other points. But his generous and courteous reference gave Holyoake great pleasure. He thought he owed the reference to J. S. Mill, but Mill replied : “I have had no opportunity of conversing with him on the subject. His mention of you, which I was glad on every account to see, is to be ascribed only to his honest and straightforward character.” In reply to Holyoake’s letters, however, Lord Stanley dwelt on the difficulties of the scheme :

“The difficulty of an absolutely uniform test of knowledge is considerable : the pressure upon examiners to alter or lower the standard, and the suspicion to which they would be exposed of acting from political motives in fixing it at the precise level selected, are serious objections : nor is the feeling of the House of Commons friendly to a simply intellectual test.”

Stansfeld offered to introduce it into the House—“if no better man can be found”—but insisted that it should be made more practical. He felt sure the House “would not stand a system of examinations and certificates.” He urged Holyoake to consult with Mr. Ellis.

<sup>1</sup> *Times*, March 22nd, 1859.

That Holyoake's limitation of the franchise, even in an idealist form, should embitter some of his old associates is not a matter of wonder. He was angrily reminded that he had dropped one of the main points of the Charter—manhood suffrage. It was not an entirely fair charge. He looked forward to the granting of a national system of education that should in time qualify every man and woman to face a moderate test. However, a Reform Bill was the topic of the hour, and the Radicals pressed for the immediate grant of manhood suffrage. His first conflict with them occurred in May 1860. On the 17th there was a large meeting of workers in the old St. Martin's Hall, in Long Acre, "to protest against the recent Parliamentary insults to the unrepresented," and Holyoake was included in the list of speakers. Lord Elcho was one of the delinquents ; but he came to the meeting to protest that he was not an outright opponent, and seriously to face their criticism. Holyoake knew that Lord Elcho supported his own intelligence-franchise, and admired his action in coming. Hence when Lord Elcho appealed to him to correct the misrepresentation of his words, he did so. He says in his diary : "Lord Elcho asked me to speak as to his political character, which I did." Since Lord Elcho supported what Holyoake regarded as the fairest scheme of suffrage, he could speak in his defence without inconsistency ; but the bulk of the meeting only saw the spectacle of Holyoake defending a wealthy landowner and anti-democrat.

The incident led later to a friendship with Lord Elcho, as we shall see, but for the time being the question of electoral reform was shelved. By this time Holyoake was doing a good deal of political journalism. He wrote leaders in the *Star* and political letters in the *Daily News* (over the signature of "Disque"). In December 1859 Cowen writes to him : "Hurrah ! 'Disque' improves

every letter . . . send me 2½ dozen *Daily News* of yesterday." Holyoake also worked on several committees—Constitutional Defence, Garibaldi, and Press Committees—and represented the Northern Reform Union at London. In one way or other he was becoming a familiar figure in the environs of the House. When Palmerston resumed office (June 1859) with a powerful coalition ministry, he was anxious to include Cobden or Bright in the Cabinet. Cobden refused, and Palmerston told Thornton Hunt—who visited him frequently, and often had Holyoake in his carriage—to ask Holyoake to find out Bright's disposition. Holyoake approached Bright indirectly, but he refused office. Cobden and Bright had little hope of substantial profit to the country from Palmerston's lead, and preferred the position of free and vigilant critics. Holyoake was not sure that they might not seriously influence the Cabinet, and so did not hesitate to convey Palmerston's hint to Bright. Cobden was still friendly, as I find a brief note he sent to Holyoake a little later. "I will do my best to promote your objects," he says.

His connection with the Northern Reform Union also brought Holyoake into touch with parliamentary life. The Newcastle Radicals discovered that a good deal of corruption was practised at Berwick in the 1859 election, and in their interest the secretary of the Union, Mr. Reed, took action for bribery. His opponents astutely laid a plea before Baron Bramwell that the complainant should find security for the heavy costs of the case. Reed was quite unable personally to do such a thing—though it was understood that the Union would find the money, if the case were lost—and Baron Bramwell put him out of court with contemptuous observations on his "puritan society." "To commence actions against people for penalties when the plaintiff cannot pay the



costs is," he said, "a cheap way of becoming a patriot—cheap, I think, and nasty;" and he made light of the bribery that was alleged. The Union drew up two petitions to Parliament, and Holyoake had them presented in the House. From Cowen's letter it appears that Lord Chelmsford (the late Lord Chancellor) strongly approved their petition for a censure of Baron Bramwell, and Disraeli promised to support both petitions. Holyoake had considerable difficulty in inducing any member to take charge of the petitions, but it was done eventually, and a Commission was appointed.

This was in the early part of 1860, and we saw that the second half of that year was occupied with the business of the Garibaldi Legion. The four succeeding years had no stirring political episodes. The two events that stand out in their dull chronicle are the signing of a commercial treaty with France and the sensational budgets of Mr. Gladstone, who had become Chancellor of the Exchequer. It is rather curious to find Holyoake active in connection with both to a slight extent. During the debate on the French Treaty he received a letter from Sir J. Stansfeld putting to him what the writer felt to be insoluble difficulties in regard to certain clauses. I have not Holyoake's reply, but Stansfeld evidently expects a solution from him—a singular tribute from a future President of the Local Government Board!

On the other hand, it will be remembered that Holyoake was one of the active workers for that repeal of the paper-duty which Mr. Gladstone carried in 1861. In the following year the Chancellor of the Exchequer visited Newcastle, and the Cowens determined to give him a princely reception. Holyoake was engaged to write a series of articles on Gladstone and his work in the *Newcastle Chronicle*. Largely owing to these

articles the population gave Gladstone a remarkable welcome. He sailed down the Tyne for eleven miles, and both banks were black with masses of enthusiastic workers. Numbers of them swam after the vessel in the river, and thousands of miners pressed to touch his hand. Holyoake was there as representative of the *Daily News*, and as Cowen's guest. He went with the party to see the foundries at Middlesborough, and he earned Mrs. Gladstone's gratitude by warning her of danger from the molten metal where she stood. He afterwards wrote to tell her privately that Mr. J. Cowen, junior, who had been hardly visible during the whole of the trip, was really responsible for the wonderful warmth of their reception.

During these years of political slackness Holyoake was chiefly occupied with Secularist and Co-operative work, as we saw, and with routine journalism. In 1863 he reported for the *Newcastle Chronicle* a famous prize-fight between Heenan and Tom King. The curious in such matters will find a very ample account of his experiences in his *Sixty Years* (ch. lxxvii). At midnight, in the depth of winter, he set out from London, with the editor of the *Sporting Life* and a pugilist "nurse," who would protect him from injury for a guinea. There can be few more striking indications of the advance in public opinion during the last fifty years than in this expedition of a journalist and moralist of Holyoake's refined temper upon a mission that he might have avoided, and his writing thirty years afterwards that he looked back on it "with satisfaction." Holyoake certainly shrank from the barbaric features of the fight, yet such a thing could not happen to-day. Public feeling was so different at that time that Holyoake's account of the fight was telegraphed to the Prince of Wales at Windsor Castle before it went to Newcastle.

Palmerston had, shortly before, headed a subscription that was made for Sayers in the House of Commons.<sup>1</sup>

Holyoake had sporting instincts from his earlier years, and association with Dr. Shorthouse and Mr. J. Cowen revived them. He often reported cricket matches and rowing races for the *Chronicle*. In 1864 he reported a public execution at London, and helped to kindle a tardy feeling of protest against such things. The spectacle of thousands of debased men and women, largely sodden with drink, assembling to enjoy—not to shudder at, as the theory implied—such an event gave fire to his pen. He reprinted his article in the pamphlet, *Public Lessons of the Hangman*, which had much to do with the subsequent agitation. Another pamphlet that he published about the same time was his *Suppressed Lecture at Cheltenham*. He had advertised a lecture with the foreboding title, “The changes of religious opinion in England since 1841,” and the authorities were not minded to have the story of his trial repeated at Cheltenham. The Lord of the Manor sent men to cut off the gas at the Corn Exchange, where it was to be delivered, and the police intimidated the owners of the other halls. The “changes” were not quite so great as he had intended to say. In the end he gave his lecture at an inn. He noticed three detectives amongst his audience.

Besides writing in the *Northern Star* and the *Newcastle Chronicle*, and occasionally in other dailies, he was still editing his own monthly, the *Secular World*, and writing at times in the new monthly magazines. The *National Review* began in 1860, the *Whitehall Review* (one of his

<sup>1</sup> I may recall that the preceding winter had been one of the most ghastly and audacious criminality. Garrotting was so common, even in Oxford Street and Piccadilly, that people went about by night with sword-sticks, revolvers, or bull-dogs. The risks men ran led to some renewal of the popularity of the art of boxing. Thirty years later the *Chronicle*, under the younger Cowen, declined to print a similar article of Holyoake's.

numerous god-children—he suggested the name to Major Bell), and the *Fortnightly* (to which he was introduced by George Henry Lewes) in 1865. In June 1864 he founded a new weekly of his own, the *English Leader*. It was a political and general organ of liberal views, giving special attention to Co-operative matters. Holyoake edited it and wrote most of the leaders. Francis Newman, Mazzini, and Dr. Shorthouse were conspicuous contributors. J. S. Mill sent him £20 toward the “publicity fund” of it, saying: “I think your projected paper has a chance of being very useful;” but in a month or two he wrote to say he “did not like it,” and asked Holyoake to regard the money as given “towards preventing you from being out of pocket by your experiment.” A distinction he noticed somewhere in it between “ladies” and “women of the humbler class” irritated him. Holyoake replied that his friends and he wrote only part of the paper, and the rest was “supplied,” for reasons of economy. Other correspondents spoke highly of it. “I wish you success heartily with your paper, and will recommend it wherever I get a chance,” Mr. Thomas Hughes (author of *Tom Brown’s Schooldays*), his earlier Christian Socialist opponent, wrote to him. Mr. Henry Campkin welcomed it on the political side. “For want of other information,” he says, “I regard you as the ‘Leader.’” It ran for twenty weeks (until October 15th, 1864), and then failed from lack of funds. But Holyoake spoke of it as a “pleasant experience” and very fair success.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> He revived the *English Leader* on January 6th, 1866, and again edited it until July 14th, when he gave it to a Mr. Gooding. After that date Holyoake wrote little in it, and came to dislike it for change of principles. It ended finally in December. The numbering of the copies is perplexing, as the new series began with a fresh number, and reverted to the original succession in March. In other words, the first ten issues in 1866 were mis-numbered 1 to 10, instead of 21 to 30.

In 1865 the political world awakened to fresh activity. Lord Palmerston's period of office was approaching its term, and it was apparent to all that the statesman's career was itself drawing to a close. Liberals and Radicals began to prepare for the electoral struggle, and the stir runs through Holyoake's correspondence and diaries. From the preceding summer Thornton Hunt, now a journalist of great influence, in the confidence of Palmerston, had been urging Holyoake to expend his gifts of agitation on the approaching contest. His repeated entreaties to Holyoake to come and talk over the situation show the great esteem he continued to have for him. He writes, for instance :

" . . . But I want especially to see *you*. I am confident there is good work to be done, although many are wavering, slow, irresolute, supine, sceptical, dead, mistrustful, stagnant, cold, contradictory, indifferent, desponding, dogmatically dead, and prone to let old and exploded assumptions block out the opportunity they might make, or rather accelerate. I am bent on trying to bring about the reunion and reawakening of the Liberal party. It is just now very fainthearted—therefore, the burnt feathers for its recovery. The leaders know its state of debility as well as possible, but have not the nerve, or zeal, to arouse its energies—they all want doses of bark. . . . I am convinced that you could afford material aid in preparing for the next session."

The elections came on in July 1865, and it is clear that Holyoake gave the "material aid" that Hunt had anticipated. He not only spoke constantly as a representative of the Reform League, but gave personal assistance to several candidates, and wrote a useful pamphlet on *The Liberal Situation*. J., S. Mill wrote of the pamphlet :

"I think it is one of the best of your writings, and well calculated to stir up the thinking minds among the working classes to larger views of political questions. So far as I am myself concerned, I cannot but be pleased to find you in sympathy with some of the most generally unpopular of my political notions."

Mr. (afterwards Sir) C. Buxton also wrote of it: "Mr. Gregory quoted you largely last night. Could I persuade you to come to breakfast on Friday? I have asked Mr. Gregory and Mr. Forster."

As the elections approached, Holyoake flung himself into the more practical work. Prof. H. Fawcett thanks him in a letter for his "kind interest;" though it appears that one of Fawcett's supporters "scrupulously took care to suppress" a telegram from Holyoake, and "entirely destroyed the influence which he [the suppressor] once possessed with his fellow working-men." Mr. P. A. Taylor, a constant correspondent, has his assistance in framing an election address. "You unconscionable and altogether ungrateful and depraved party!" he exclaims, at some new demand of Holyoake's; "such conduct from you almost persuadeth me to be a Christian." More important was the service he gave to his old opponent, Mr. Thomas Hughes. He recommended Hughes to the Lambeth electors, drew up his election address and several posters for him, and did much to further his candidature. He knew that Hughes would oppose in Parliament several measures which he himself wished to see passed, but he recommended him on general grounds. A letter of Hughes to him in May suggests the extent of the assistance he gave him:

"DEAR MR. HOLYOAKE,

"I am writing in some anxiety for news from you. When shall I go on the stump? or shall I meet

any persons, whom, and where? . . . I am game for anything except going in for the public-house and cab line. I shall tell the electors this plainly from the first, and then they can take me, or let me alone, as they like. . . . If the whole thing has collapsed, never mind. I shall find the right place some day, and if not the world will slide all the same.

"Yours ever,

"THOMAS HUGHES."

The letter seems to show appreciation and indebtedness, but Holyoake complains that, when Hughes was returned, he treated his "infidel" auxiliary with coldness, and did not invite him to the festive commemoration of his success.<sup>1</sup>

Just before the fray opened Holyoake left London for Newcastle, where he was to work for Cowen's election. Since the previous autumn there had been some question of Holyoake being appointed secretary to Mr. Cowen, senior, and he clearly welcomed the prospect. He had long been at home amongst the sturdy Northumbrians, and was proud of his association with their typical spokesmen, the Cowens. Here again, however, his heterodoxy proved costly. Before the end of 1864 the younger Cowen wrote that he did not think his father would want a private secretary, if he were returned at the general election. He added in a postscript: "Your letter to the London papers has been made the text of some unpleasant comments by our opponents." At the beginning of July, nevertheless, Holyoake was invited to Blaydon, and he took a very active part in the work. Mr. Cowen was returned, but

<sup>1</sup> *Bygones*, II, 110. He generously attributes the defect to Hughes's "ecclesiastical, not his real, self." Holyoake's daughter, Mrs. Praill, who had helped in the Lambeth contest, repeated the service for Hughes afterwards at Marylebone. One or two notes from F. D. Maurice to Holyoake at this period display only a cold politeness.

Holyoake wrote in his diary a few days afterwards: "I judge J. C. is alarmed at the attacks on me in the newspapers," and a letter of J. S. Mill's says: "I congratulate you on the triumphant return of Mr. Cowen for Newcastle, and I regret that the attacks on you should have prevented the realisation of your hopes in regard to the secretaryship."

The nature of the attacks will be seen in the following extract from one of the opposing journals at a later date:

"Newcastle, it appears, was represented at the great Hyde Park riot on Monday evening, and by no less a personage than the secularist editor, and lecturer-on-things-in-general, Mr. George Jacob Holyoake. From Radical Mr. Joseph Cowen, M.P., to secularist Mr. George Jacob Holyoake may not be a very great descent, but to the intelligence and good sense of Newcastle the spectacle is a painful one. When Newcastle selected Mr. Cowen, as a silent member, people cognisant of the means adopted, and of the amiable weakness of the aspiring representative, might have experienced some little regret, but no disappointment. Few, however, conceived that Mr. George Jacob Holyoake, who has for years been conspicuous for his attacks upon Christianity and the Bible, should be knit to the coat-tails of Mr. Joseph Cowen. Who appointed Mr. Holyoake to make Newcastle the equivalent of law-breaking democracy? Mr. Holyoake, it has been hinted, contributes the thunder to a Radical contemporary distinguished for sensationalism and horseflesh proclivities. . . . What next? Did we not know our fellow townsmen, we should answer 'The Deluge.'"

Dickens had no need to make laborious research when the chief organs of large towns were publishing leading articles of this type. The extract shows, however, that Cowen had mastered his scruples and appointed Holyoake his secretary. The diaries indicate, indeed, that



he spent a large proportion of his time in the House, when the new Parliament started work in February 1866. It was an inspiring period in the life of Westminster. Palmerston was dead, and Gladstone was opening his historic career as leader of the Commons, with the brilliant opposition of Disraeli. Cobden and W. J. Fox were dead, but Bright was still voicing, in his majestic oratory, the stimulating protests of the "Manchester School." Sir John Trelawny was there no longer; but John Stuart Mill was one of the 128 new members that sat on the benches. The Queen's Speech had put the question of electoral reform in the forefront of legislation, and one needed little discernment to see behind it the rising Liberal ideals of school-reform, Church-reform, and workshop-reform. Once get the intelligent mass of the workers fairly represented in that House, and legislation would march triumphantly along the path of serious social reform. Here was a sphere of usefulness of far greater moment than those in which he had hitherto moved.

With that feeling Holyoake looked down on the grave, thoughtful face of the Queen, as she faced the brilliant House. It seemed not without significance that she had discarded the heavy old gilded coach of the Georges and driven to Westminster in a light modern carriage. The Georgian atmosphere was gone from the House, and the breezes of the new Liberalism seemed to give it increasing vigour. But it did not take Holyoake many weeks to discover that his new sphere very closely resembled the old ones in its reception of his peculiar temper. He soon found himself, as he had often done, standing in the ranks of the more advanced, where his convictions placed him, yet somehow having more sympathetic relations with their opponents.

## CHAPTER XVII

### THE IDEALIST IN POLITICS

HOLYOAKE has said somewhere that Robert Owen's friends must have regarded him, in the days when he sought political influence without the least regard to party-divisions, as "a political lunatic." He had hoped to secure the co-operation of Tories and Radicals in his socio-political scheme: to have Lord Liverpool fraternal with Francis Place. It is curious that almost at the time when Holyoake, "the most practical man in England," was lightly condemning this frailty of his great master, he was betraying it himself in no slight degree. It was the creditable frailty of importing idealism into politics, and ignoring laws or conventions of the party-system that seemed to lay restriction on generous feeling. Whether the frailty be really in the idealism or in the political system I need not stop to consider, but the attempt to unite the two brought many an unflattering epithet on Holyoake in the sixties and seventies. His very sense of justice, exceptionally detached from considerations of expediency, was dragging him into the same difficulties that it had done in the Chartist, Secularist, and Co-operative movements, and that had been encountered by Robert Owen before him.

His own position was one of unwavering Liberalism, but he maintained that this was consistent with expressing a warm approval of his party's enemies whenever they did something that was clearly creditable and

advantageous. He insisted on thinking that even bishops and peers were capable of generous movements. The difficulty was that his far-reaching ideas of social reform put him inevitably in the extreme left wing of the Liberal party, where such sentiments were rare and incurred suspicion. His place was in the Reform League, of which he was made a Vice-president in 1865. But the bulk of the Leaguers demanded manhood-suffrage, and heartily disliked his scheme of an intelligence-franchise, especially when they saw it adopted by men like Lord Stanley and Lord Elcho; nor is it idle to note that Mr. C. Bradlaugh was an active member of the executive of the League. On the other hand, Holyoake felt that there was much hollow rhetoric in their resonant claims that all the workers were entitled to the vote, and he resented their virtual exclusion of women from the franchise. His was the flexibility of principle: theirs the inflexibility of phrase. They, very naturally, used different qualifications.

The trouble began in April 1866. Gladstone, representing Earl Russell in the House, had brought forward an elaborate measure of reform which would have the effect of adding some 400,000 to the list of voters. He was at once subjected to a cross-fire. Radicals attacked him for the insufficiency of his Bill: Tories for its excess. Then there occurred the political movement that Bright has made famous with a phrase—the withdrawal of a number of Gladstone's supporters into their "Cave of Adullam." The group of old Palmerstonian Whigs joined in the Tory protests against the Bill, and their secession weakened the ministry to such an extent that the Tories were able to defeat it. Faced with the prospect of a Tory administration and the loss of even Gladstone's measure of reform, the Radicals now assailed the Adullamites with all the force of that political

vocabulary which experience of such situations has created. Yet Holyoake's idiosyncratic view of the issue led him to support the Adullamites, to some extent. Their leader was the Right Hon. Robert Lowe (Lord Sherbrooke), who justified his attack on the Bill with strong and fairly obvious reflections on the political incompetence of so many of the workers. Holyoake's Radical friends had retorted with that indiscriminate defence of the workers which he felt to be untrue, and so we cannot be surprised when we find him writing to Mr. Lowe :

"SIR,

"The friends of the working classes are comporting themselves as women, who claim equal rights and resent equal criticism. It is rather our part to hear dispassionately whatever may be said of us and answer it—not abusing the sayer thereof. The *Daily News* has joined in censuring you. I think it only fair to call your attention to what it has said—much more serious as regards working-class character, as I remarked publicly at the time, than anything you have said."

Holyoake's attitude is clear and consistent enough ; but it is just as easy to see that his friends would resent it, and during the whole of these years of reform-agitation the difficulty was bound to continue. It recurred in a more serious form in the following month, when he again made a public defence of Lord Elcho. He had spoken some time before at an Exeter Hall meeting, with the Duke of Argyll in the chair, and Lord Lyttleton on the platform, and had written to Lord Elcho that

"the time he gave, the patient attention he paid, the unaffected interest which he took, in an inquiry into the industrial claims of working men, and the manly respect

which the men felt and expressed towards his Grace and to Lord Lyttleton, were proofs that there is at the bottom but one class and one feeling in the country."

Lord Elcho had begged to make his acquaintance, and friendly relations were maintained between them for some years. The charge of "toadying" came glibly enough; though I find that, in one of his earliest letters to Lord Elcho, Holyoake says he is for the measure "that carries the people of this country soonest and farthest on the road of self-government—for which I believe and know them to be as well fitted as the Middle Class who now govern." There was no concealment of differences on either side. However, in 1866 Holyoake's feeling was made public in a way that greatly irritated his colleagues.

On April 11th the Reform League held a meeting in St. Martin's Hall, the president, Mr. Beales, taking the chair. The object of the meeting was to support Gladstone's Bill, and so large a crowd came that a number of overflow-meetings had to be held. Before this dense and fiery gathering of workers Lord Elcho once more came to justify or extenuate his criticism of them. The chairman announced that Lord Elcho desired to say a few words, but, the reporters say, he was "greeted with a storm of indignation" and long refused a hearing. On the appeal of Mr. T. Hughes the audience at length became silent, and Lord Elcho addressed them. He entirely denied the more offensive phrases attributed to him, and claimed that he was as desirous as any for justice to every class. Before the end of his short speech the murmurs had almost wholly ceased, and he was very generally applauded at the close. Holyoake had not a difficult task in following and making some defence of Lord Elcho, and he afterwards wrote letters to the *Times* and other dailies to the same effect.

Both in his speech and the letters he said that he differed from Lord Elcho politically, but could testify to his sincere desire for social reform.

When Lord Elcho opened his *Times* on April 13th he at once wrote to express to Holyoake his "surprise" and "gratitude for this uncalled-for act of friendliness." Mr. James Clay, who was pressing a Franchise Bill in the House, wrote that he was "greatly gratified" to see the letter. But it may be imagined that others read it with different feelings. "God bless my soul!" Mr. P. A. Taylor wrote: "so G. J. H. stands sponsor for Lord Elcho's honest desire to do political justice to the people—the man who said in the House of Commons with a sneer that there seemed 'a large dilution of beer in the cream of the working classes.'" Lord Elcho's letters, which are very cordial to Holyoake, show no disposition to sneer, but merely a matter-of-fact conviction that the bulk of the workers could not profitably exercise the suffrage.

At last Holyoake brought to a head the annoyance of the Leaguers. A Tory ministry had in July succeeded that of Earl Russell and Mr. Gladstone, and there was every prospect of the popular demand being cheated with some intricate and unsubstantial measure of reform. The League went to work more vigorously than ever, and before long London was stirred with a rare political excitement. It was announced that a demonstration would be held in Hyde Park on Monday, July 23rd, and every one expected a violent eruption of the spirit of the metropolis. For some time the workers had gathered in dark mood to rail at the driving gentry in Rotten Row. Not, of course, that there was any approach to the revolutionary spirit of 1832. The pace at which England had travelled during Holyoake's life may be judged from the difference in the weapons used in the

earlier and the later reform-agitations. In 1866 a hand-bill was distributed through the east end of London with the text :

“WANTED, 10,000 costermongers on their donkeys to parade Rotten Row, to test the question as to whether this or any other portion of Hyde Park belongs to a class or to the entire people.”

Pikes were as obsolete, and seemed as remote, as cross-bows. But the Home Secretary had unwisely forbidden the meeting, and directed the police to close the Park at five o'clock.

There was some anxiety when, an hour later, the contingents of the League began to pour down Edgware Road and Oxford Street with their bands and banners. A strong force of police was drawn up before the gates at the Marble Arch, and they found themselves facing a vast and menacing crowd, with the customary leaven of ruffians. The executive of the League, however, acted with judgment. The little band of officers, which included Holyoake, marched up to the gate, were refused admission, and at once gave the order for a peaceful march to Trafalgar Square. The crowd was disappointed, and began to close on the police. Holyoake had to fight his way through a thick mass. At one moment a man thrust a watch into his hand, and hurried away. He recognised his own watch, restored by a detective.

How the crowd bore down the railings after the League had gone, and rushed through the Park in riotous and destructive tumult, and went on to storm Belgravian windows, is well known. For our purpose the chief interest lies in an episode that began a few days before the struggle. When the police posted their prohibition of the meeting, Mr. Beales, Holyoake, and

a few other officers of the League called upon the Home Secretary. Walpole, a sensitive and cultured gentleman rather than a firm administrator, could give no decided answer to these representatives of the tumultuous energies of the metropolis. He spoke so waveringly that he gave Mr. Beales the impression that they might hold the meeting. Rumour even had it that he shed tears of perplexity at the interview, and the London hawkers sold thousands of bottles of "Walpole's tears" in the days that followed. A bottle was preserved in Holyoake's museum of social antiquities, with the Chartist pike, and the Garibaldi flag, and many another reminder of his stirring career. But Holyoake distinctly understood that Mr. Walpole reserved his decision, and he was surprised to hear Mr. Beales announce afterwards that the meeting was authorised. By a curious mischance—though it was represented by his enemies in the League as a deliberate act—his view of the matter came to Walpole's ears, and was warmly welcomed. He had received a notice to attend a second deputation to the Home Office, and went there. The deputation had in the meantime been cancelled, but the notice had not reached him, and he found himself alone at the Home Office. His inquiries led to a conversation with Walpole's secretary, and this turned on the question of the Home Secretary's words.

The whole thing was accidental. Unfortunately, ministers represented in the House that Holyoake had gone expressly to the Home Office to repudiate Mr. Beales's construction. Again Holyoake found himself regarded with anger by many of his natural associates: an anger that was not mitigated when the Tory *Standard* described him as "a man of high honour and probity, whose opinions, however offensive to the general feeling of society, had not prevented him from commanding the



respect of all who knew his reverence for truth and his thorough loyalty in all dealings with friend or foe"! It was something to have elicited this covert estimate of him from his opponents, but the price was heavy on the Radical side. Holyoake felt that his action was morally correct, and he ignored the anger of the Leaguers. In a letter to the *Times* he made a plain statement of his impression of Walpole's words, and was warmly thanked by the Home Secretary, who wrote him :

"SIR,

"I beg to thank you very sincerely for your kind and generous letter, as well as for your kind and generous conduct with reference to what passed at the Reform League deputation.

"These are severe trials which public men must bear with patience, but the testimony of yourself, and of others like yourself, is the best alleviation of them.

"I have the honour to be, Sir, with renewed thanks,

"Your obedient and humble servant,

"S. H. WALPOLE."

The Home Secretary was being violently assailed from all quarters of the House, and would almost certainly have been compelled to resign if it had not been for Holyoake's firm support. There were those who said openly that he kept the Tory Government in office. For himself it was a matter of simple truth and justice, and if the requirements of a party demanded any deviation from these he could not be a party-man.<sup>1</sup>

The verdict of the Leaguers on his conduct might be expected at the great meeting that was to be held at the

<sup>1</sup> Lord Elcho sent his warm approval, it need not be said. But it is amusing to read in his letter :

"I attribute my broken windows and all the broken heads, not to Bright and the Reform League, but to the tone, conduct, and flesh and blood arguments and appeals of the late Leader of the House [Gladstone]! His silence during these disgraceful riots was disgraceful to him."

Agricultural Hall in a few days. Holyoake decided to attend it as an officer of the League. By this time the country was quickened with an enthusiasm similar to that of the early thirties, and far greater than any that it has since displayed. Again the provincial towns held those vast meetings of 100,000 and 200,000 workers, of which we read with envy to-day, and even lethargic London was deeply stirred. Some 20,000 people crushed into the Agricultural Hall, and many thousands more hung about the entrance. When Holyoake forced his way through the crowd on the platform, and sat down in the front row, he gazed on a rare spectacle for the metropolis. Thick masses of heated workers covered the galleries, and flooded the body of the Hall. Men even climbed the pillars, and sat astride the beams and girders in the roof. It was a solid and demonstrative mass of Radicalism, and hardly one in the 20,000 was ignorant that the quiet, refined-looking man sitting in the front row on the platform had come between them and the detested Home Secretary.

But Holyoake had well-remembered claims to respect, and he was in good company. Beside him sat John Stuart Mill, who had walked with him from Westminster to Islington, and pushed with him to the front of the platform. Few voices reached far into the crowded Hall that night, and Mill's had little chance of carrying far. But when the stentorian voice of G. J. Mantle announced that Mill was to speak, a comparative stillness was secured, and all watched with subdued respect the frail but commanding figure of the great social teacher. Under his tutelage Holyoake was safe from hostile demonstration; though I doubt if it was necessary—so transparently honest, to the unprejudiced, must Holyoake's action have seemed, and so great were his services. It was at all events clear—I gather from a letter from the

Co-operator, Jagers—that there were those on the platform who showed disappointment when he walked away unassailed with Mill.

That the bulk of the workers would follow his actions without prejudice is clear from a number of incidents of the time. I find a letter to him, toward the close of 1866, from the workers of the "Perseverance Boilermaking Company," of Deptford, asking him to act as arbitrator for them, in conjunction with Mr. Thomas Hughes. At the beginning of 1867 he asked Lord Elcho and Mr. Mill to get him a seat on the Royal Commission that Lord Derby had appointed to examine into the conduct of the Trades Unions. A number of serious attacks had been made upon non-Unionist workers in the north, and they were imputed to the Unions. A worker at Sheffield was shot with an air-gun, and the murderer declared that he had received £20 from the secretary of the Union for doing it. At Manchester thousands of needles were put into the clay of non-Unionist brick-makers. Outrages on watchmen and property were reported daily. Though the Union officials denied that any of these outrages had their sanction, and themselves demanded an inquiry, there was a very strong feeling against them in Westminster, and Unionism seemed to have encountered a new peril. Holyoake pressed for a seat on the Commission in order to watch the play of prejudice and guard the interest of justice, but the list of members was finally drawn up before his friends spoke. Walpole assured Mill that if he had not already had occasion to tear up one list after it had been signed by the Queen, he would have taken that step to find a place for Holyoake.

About the same time he had a short correspondence with Lord Brougham, who still kept a vigilant eye on the progress of the people and seems to have noted

Holyoake's position with great satisfaction. Towards the close of 1866 Holyoake sent Lord Brougham copies of his *Self Help* and *Life of Robert Owen*, and asked permission to dedicate a fresh edition to him. Brougham replied that he "had read with interest all Mr. Holyoake's statements which had been printed," and only hesitated about the dedication because, "great as he esteems that honour to be, he has refused leave to so many to dedicate that he was afraid they might take objections." "However," he concluded, "it is for Mr. Holyoake to take what course he pleases, and he may be assured of Lord Brougham considering the dedication an honour." The aged statesman, who had been a warm supporter of Owen, and had shown life-long regard for the welfare of the workers, evidently felt that Owen's spirit had largely passed on to Holyoake.

Another experience of the same year shows that he was regarded as having much influence with London workers. In January Mr. Teignmouth Shore (of Messrs. Cassell's) wrote him that they were anxious to find a "very graphic writer and one personally acquainted with the working classes." The correspondence ended shortly in Holyoake being invited to edit their *Working Man*, a twopenny weekly that aimed at conveying an impression of the life of the workers. Holyoake was to contribute six columns a week, and to "avoid writing on industrial and social topics elsewhere." The engagement began in February 1866 (with the seventh issue of the paper), and I gather that he was a general writer for the firm during the year. But it will readily be understood that the "Belle Sauvage" was a somewhat curious home for a Vice-president of the Reform League and leader of English Secularism. He did indeed assume his innocent pen-name of "Landor Praed," but by the autumn his connection with the *Working Man* was over.

He continued to write a column of "Town Talk" in various papers of Messrs. Cassell's, until (in February 1867) the general editor reported that the firm's agents complained of "an evident leaning on the liberal side of politics" in his contributions. He was requested to "leave out politics altogether." "You could," Mr. Hayley wrote, "dwell more upon improvements in and about the City, domestic matters, etc., more especially taking up anecdotes of great men, when they die, marry, or do anything which brings them into prominent notice." That was hardly Holyoake's conception of his function, and the connection did not last much longer.<sup>1</sup>

It is, perhaps, more curious to find him writing in the *People's Magazine*—a Church of England journal! At the request of the Rev. Stopford Brooke he wrote an article on temperance, with more than usual discretion, for it. His relations to Stopford Brooke were interesting, as the following letter (July 30th, 1869) indicates :

"MY DEAR MR. HOLYOAKE,

"Thank you very much for your letter and for the opportunity you have afforded me of giving some pleasure to another. I have sent the book to Miss A. White.

"I have as much chance of the Deanery of Durham as I have of finding myself Prime Minister. I do not say I should not like it. I should. But, after all, it is

<sup>1</sup> He was at the same time (1865 to 1870, I believe) writing for the *Glasgow Morning Journal*, and sending weekly letters to the *Saturday Post* (under the same Radical editor, Robert Somers). I find leaders by him in the *Darlington Mercury*, and he contributed much to the *New York Tribune*, with the London editor of which, Mr. George Smalley, he was intimate for many years. Mr. Milnes Edge sought his aid in the establishment of the *Democrat*, in which Huxley and Frederic Harrison were to write. In 1869 he began to write in the *Echo*. There are also many letters from Captain Frederic A. Maxse, who seems to have procured space for him on the *Examiner*. Later he wrote on the *London Figaro*.

better, at least when one is still growing, to be freed from the trammels of a 'position,' and to be one of the 'unattached' clergymen. If I were made a Dean now—who knows?—human nature is weak—I might harden into a Conservative in twenty years, and I should like to die a Radical in politics as well as in theology. When I say Radical, I mean that 'they' call me Radical—a lover of Democracy.

"I am,

"Yours very sincerely,

"STOPFORD A. BROOKE."

In the meantime the discussion of electoral reform continued to seethe in the metropolis, and our idealist found himself repeatedly in positions that could fall to few others. The Tory ministry were forced to take up the subject, if they were to remain in office, and the years 1867 and 1868 were occupied with a masterly duel between Disraeli and Gladstone, who had now attained the leadership of the two great parties. Disraeli saw that the impulse from the country was irresistible, and he trimmed the sails of his party with "consummate ability," to use the words of a Liberal historian. He first drew up a series of imposing resolutions; but the House declined to proceed by resolutions, and the Reform Leaguers retorted with a demand for manhood suffrage, which was carried clamorously at its crowded meetings. Then, after a feint with a moderate measure, Disraeli introduced a Bill of such a range that three of the more distinguished ministers—the Earl of Carnarvon, Viscount Cranborne (Lord Salisbury), and General Peel—left the Cabinet. The Bill was introduced on March 18th (1867), and passed the House of Lords early in August. As Disraeli originally framed it, nearly a quarter of a million voters would be added to the register. It was based on a calculation that, by its provisions, the voting power

would be in the hands of the middle class to the extent of one half, while the aristocracy and the workers would equally divide the remaining half. Household franchise was granted in boroughs, and a £10 franchise in counties. But the Bill underwent the most remarkable modifications in its progress through committee. Most extensive enlargements were adopted by Disraeli, and his "balance of power" amongst the three social classes completely disappeared. Almost every change proposed by Gladstone was incorporated in the Bill. The county franchise was lowered, a lodger franchise was admitted, and great concessions were made in the redistribution of seats.

There is no doubt that the concessions, though they fell far short of manhood suffrage, were much greater than the Leaguers had expected to see. The new Toryism baffled them almost as much as it did the Liberals. Every party in the House was rent by differences of opinion, and differences of sentiment in regard to Disraeli's position. Roebuck and some other stalwart Radicals openly supported Disraeli. The League sent a deputation to interview him, and his genial reception gave many of them a new idea of a Tory statesman. Further, the League had in May gained a victory over the Home Secretary as to the use of the Park. Mr. Bradlaugh was strongly of opinion that the Government had no power to close the Park against them, and it was largely through his influence that the question was tested. The Government had to yield, and the demonstration was successfully held. Holyoake writes in his diary :

"May 6th. End of the British Constitution. Hyde Park Meeting.

"May 7th. Constitution survived. Found alive this

morning lying among the flowers of the Park. Both quite fresh."

Under the eyes of large bodies of police and military the workers had held their meeting, while Government posters still lingered pitifully on the walls forbidding the demonstration. Seeing the happy progress of events, Holyoake was moved once more to write one of those amiable letters to an enemy of his party that we find so frequently at this part of his career. This time it was to Disraeli himself that he sent his support. His letter runs :

"SIR,

"As one of those Radicals who have opposed you, permit me to personally thank you for the thought of the People shown in the progress of the Reform Bill. Should there be an 'ugly rush,' as some have predicted, the party whose Bill is the occasion of it will not be likely to suffer in it—a flood, if it occurred, would be sure to float him—even a storm could be commanded by the intrepid minister who, like Prospero, raised it. But there will be no rush, nor flood, nor storm, whatever the figure of the foreboding may be. The English people have the sense both of order and of gratitude. They know that the Whigs would have kept the door of the Constitution but just ajar for ever : and they will honour the minister who has opened it wide to them. My reasons for seeking the great enfranchisement you and Lord Derby have accorded were expressed in the petition Mr. Mill lately presented for me, and which is enclosed. It is for these reasons I offer my acknowledgments.

"I have, Sir, the honour to be

"Yours faithfully,

"G. J. HOLYOAKE."

Neither Whigs nor Radicals could admire Holyoake's action in writing such letters as this to Conservative



ministers—we shall see that he wrote also to Lord Derby—and so his progress in the political world was not rapid. On the other hand, he continued to press for Radical measures which only the more advanced generally sought. As large a measure of enfranchisement as was possible at that time had been secured, but voting was still open, and Holyoake now began to agitate for the adoption of the ballot.

The question of voting by ballot had been discussed in political circles for half a century. Indeed, it was under discussion in the House itself as early as 1708, but it was not until the great electoral struggle of 1832 that it became a prominent question. Mr. Grote, the historian, proposed a Bill for its adoption in 1833, and, when he left the House, the reform was continuously pressed by Mr. H. F. Berkeley. Holyoake had adopted it years before, as it was one of the six points of the Charter, and with the larger franchise of 1868 he began to press for it once more. Simple as the reform seems in our eyes to-day, there were many democratic politicians at that time who opposed it. Mr. J. S. Mill was a notable instance, and Mr. Gladstone was opposed to it until 1869. Quite apart from the corrupt fears of those who felt that the ballot would destroy their influence over tenants, employees, or other dependents, who had a vote, there were many who felt, with Mr. Thomas Hughes, that to cast one's vote openly was more manly and bracing for the electors. Mill's feeling was akin to this when he depreciated the ballot as "secret voting," and urged reformers to erase it from their programmes. Those who wished to cast a discreditable vote could, Mill said, "escape shame or responsibility" by means of the ballot.

It seems that by 1868 these authoritative condemnations were checking the demand that had been growing for a

generation amongst reformers. Holyoake addressed a meeting of the Reform League on the subject at St. James's Hall in January 1868, and combated Mill's objections. His plea for the ballot was thought so fresh and forcible that the League printed his address in an enlarged form.<sup>1</sup> Bright described it as "the only original argument he had yet seen," and Mr. Berkeley wrote: "A greater than I has arisen." The argument was certainly stronger than Mill's, and it cannot be doubted that the pamphlet, followed up by letters in the press from Holyoake, had great influence; though, with characteristic candour, Holyoake declared that the first result of the adoption of the ballot would be a short span of Tory rule.

He sent a copy to Mr. Gladstone, and received the following acknowledgment:

"DEAR SIR,

"I thank you very much for your pamphlet. I will not say that you efface from my mind the arguments of Sydney Smith and John Mill, but the Ballot, or its friends, have to thank you for an able and manful defence.

"I remain

"Your very faithful and obedient

"W. E. GLADSTONE."

Gladstone's writing is, unfortunately, not clear, and the word "manful" reads like "successful." The point was important, as Gladstone's conversion to the ballot was earnestly desired by the Radicals. Holyoake submitted the letter to a notary, who pronounced in favour of "successful," and he then repeated it in semi-confidence to parliamentary acquaintances. One of these, Mr. Holden, publicly referred to it, and the press soon

<sup>1</sup> *A New Defence of the Ballot*, 8 pp., price 3d.

announced that Gladstone was prepared to reconsider the question of the ballot. There was some excitement, and Gladstone was naturally annoyed, but Holyoake got a correction inserted in the papers, and wrote to explain the accident to Gladstone. However, the evidence as to corruption at the 1868 elections, which was elicited by a Committee of the House, had great weight with Gladstone and other previous opponents of the ballot. In 1871 he introduced a Bill for its adoption, and this was passed in the following year.

The general election of 1868 to which I have just alluded interests us, as it was the occasion of Holyoake's second appeal for a place in Parliament. We saw that he withdrew from the candidature he had meditated in the Tower Hamlets in 1857. In 1868 the Tory Government, which had held office for some time in face of a Liberal majority, fell before Gladstone's strategy. Disraeli had astutely avoided the introduction of any measure which the various Liberal sections would unite in opposing, and so retained power. When Lord Derby resigned (February 1868) he succeeded to the Premiership. But his triumph was brief. Apropos of Disraeli's Irish Reform Bill, Gladstone moved a resolution in favour of the disestablishment of the Irish Church, and secured a majority against the Government. Disraeli clung to office for a time, but yielded in the summer, and the elections were fixed for November. Intense curiosity was felt as to the result of the recent extension of the franchise, which would now take effect for the first time. It was naturally expected that the newly enfranchised working men would swell the Radical representation, and a number of their own spokesmen presented themselves for election. Holyoake decided to appeal to the electors of Birmingham. Bradlaugh was nominated for Northampton, and Odger, E. O. Greening, Ernest

Jones, and others, sought election. Holyoake (and Odger) did not proceed to an actual contest, and there can be little doubt of their wisdom. All the working-men representatives, as well as prominent Radicals like Mill and Roebuck, were defeated. The Liberals were returned with so unmistakable a majority that Disraeli hastily made place for Gladstone, and one of the most brilliant periods of Liberal administration began. But all calculations that there would be a specifically democratic outcome of the extension of the franchise were completely upset. The new House was the wealthiest that had ever been returned to Westminster.

Holyoake's candidature was another of those idealist moves that give an apparently eccentric complexion to his political progress in the sixties. In reality, it was only eccentric in the sense that each step was taken in simple truth to the feeling of the moment, and without regard to conventional political considerations. We saw that he stood out from the Chartists with an explicit trust in the middle class as representatives of the workers. His friends were mainly of the middle class, and their real sympathy with the workers impressed him. In the course of the sixties he went on to include wealthy Tories like Lord Elcho in the group, and declared there was only "one class" in the country at the bottom. He seemed to be drifting farther away from the Radical side of Liberalism. Suddenly, in 1868, we find him posing as an "independent labour candidate," in the literal meaning of the term. At Birmingham he sets out to oppose Liberals as well as Tories, and makes a powerful plea for the representation of the workers by men of their own class. In his address he gives prominence to familiar Liberal issues like Irish Disestablishment and national education, but he distinctly dissociates himself from the

Liberal party. The Liberals are the "master class," and cannot legislate from the worker's point of view. "A Democracy," he says, "is a great trouble. The Conservative is enraged to have this necessity put upon him; the Whigs never meant it to come to this; and I am not sure that many of the Radicals like it."

A pioneer in so many things, he is fairly entitled to that name in regard to Labour Representation. On that express ground he had opened a candidature in the Tower Hamlets in 1857. That was, I believe, the first case on record. Now, though other workers presented themselves, his was the most explicit plea for the representation of the workers by workers. For many reasons he did not go beyond issuing an address. He could not have taken the oath if he had been returned, but there was no chance of his being returned. He retired so early that one hardly finds a reference to him in the Birmingham press, but from his letters of the following years I gather that those workers of Birmingham who wanted a "labour" candidate wanted a man fresh from the workshop. Holyoake's real hold in Birmingham was, as we shall see, amongst thoughtful Liberal manufacturers like J. Collings, J. Chamberlain, and S. Timmins. In those circumstances it was futile to think of engaging in a contest against Bright and his Liberal colleagues, who were eventually elected. However, his action gave a great impulse to the demand for a Labour Party. His manifesto was circulated as a pamphlet (*Working-class Representation*), and was widely discussed. He urged the workers to organise and create an election-fund: to cease looking about, as they did, for "a rich Radical," and not to allow their candidates to be pushed to the bottom of the poll by "inane people with money bags about them." The scheme seemed very quixotic forty years ago, like many other sketchy

projects of his, but we have seen it realised. Indeed, a Labour Representation League was formed at once, and Holyoake was an active member of its Council for a number of years; until it fell into some of those injudicious ways that are inevitable in an adolescent political body.

I do not think that this apparent *volta face* needs any lengthy justification. He had always held that the first duty of the enfranchised middle class was to secure the judicious enfranchisement of the workers. During the struggles of 1866-68 large numbers of them showed that they were far from admitting such a duty; and since Disraeli's Bill had enfranchised as large a proportion of the workers as Holyoake's pet scheme would have done, it was time to test their powers. He desired perfect amity with the Liberals—the "Liberal-Labour" member was his ideal for the rest of his life—but the agitation over the alleged misdeeds of the Trades Unions had shown that on certain issues the Liberal had a bias for capital and property against labour. Many Liberals and some Conservatives honestly agreed with him. Mr. Somerset Beaumont sent him fifty pounds to help to pay his election-expenses. "If you succeed," he said, "it will give me genuine pleasure to have contributed, however humbly, towards the working classes being represented by a man of so much talent, integrity, and independence as you possess." Stopford Brooke (Beaumont's brother-in-law) wrote that he had read Holyoake's address "with great admiration and interest," and some Liberal members were equally complimentary. The *Westminster Review* (January 1869) took his address as the text of its reflections on the elections, and spoke of it and its author in the highest terms.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> See quotation in Vol. I, p. 356.

The failure of 1868 puts a term to his political activity in the sixties, and throws him back upon the broader social work for which he was unquestionably better equipped, with his obtrusive conscience and his simple sympathies. We shall find him making another attempt sixteen years afterwards, but he was fated to watch the great play in the House of Commons only from the Press Gallery, the Speaker's Gallery, or the Strangers' Gallery. He, of course, continued his work as a political journalist and on the executive of several organisations. In 1869 we find him on the Council of the Reform League, the Labour Representation League, the Education League, the Financial Reform Union, and the Land Tenure Reform Association. But, on the whole, interest returns to his social and educational work. The wide development and organisation of the Co-operative Movement at this period threw a great deal of work on him, the course of events in the Secularist world brought him into prominence again, and he was an active member of the Sunday League, the British Association, the Dialectical Society, and other bodies. Reserving for more connected study his work in the Co-operative Movement, we may indulge, for a chapter, in the pleasanter task of following his varied and interesting activity year by year during the next decade.

## CHAPTER XVIII

### FROM THE STRANGERS' GALLERY

HOLYOAKE had left his villa at Regent's Park in 1867, the year in which his mother died at Birmingham. The house was large, and his children were dispersing. When, at the end of 1866, the painter Merritt ceased to live with them—I find Holyoake and him dining together later at Woolner's—he took a smaller house at Sudbury for his wife and chambers for himself in Cockspur Street. Mrs. Holyoake loved flowers, and it was a bright relief for her husband to fly to the hills occasionally from the dust and din of his London work.

To his journalistic and literary work, his lecturing, and his active assistance of half a dozen committees, was now added the parliamentary secretaryship for Cowen. The secret of longevity which he used to impart to younger men in the nineties, when they found him surviving so vigorously in a stricken field, was "moderation in all things, work included." That may have been his rule for preserving longevity, but it had little to do with his attaining it. A journalist who knew him in the seventies tells me that after a good morning's work at journalism or research for Cowen, he would go to the House, to help Cowen through the ever-changing debates or continue his work in the rooms of Hale White. In the early morning Cowen and he would return to Cowen's house (where Holyoake had a bedroom for a time), and fling themselves on the cold



turkey that awaited them. Holyoake, who was careless of meals during the day, would make a formidable attack on the bird, and then retire to his room ; and he would be up at eight in the morning for his journalistic work.

An interesting outcome of his attendance at the House was the placing of the limelight (now electric light) in the clock-tower. He probably had much trouble in keeping Cowen informed as to whether the House was sitting or no at a particular hour, and he noticed that other members and reporters had the same inconvenience. One had to go as far as the gates of the House and see whether certain of the gas-jets in the yard were still burning. The oxy-hydrogen light was then coming into use, and it occurred to him that if one were put in the top of the tower, and lit while the House was sitting, it would prove a great advantage. He suggested this to Lord John Manners, then President of the Board of Works, but his letter was merely acknowledged and filed. When Mr. Ayrton came to the office he found the letter, and carried out the suggestion.

A more valuable idea occurred to him at the House in 1869, and was accepted by the Government. The Foreign Office was in the habit of receiving "Reports on the state of manufactures and commerce abroad" from the embassies and legations, and it seemed to Holyoake that, while capital enjoyed this advantage, labour should have the corresponding service of reports on the labour-market and industrial conditions abroad. He asked Bright to speak to Lord Clarendon, then Foreign Minister, on the subject, and was invited to send in an explicit document. Bright reported that Lord Clarendon found the suggestion "admirable," and had sent instructions to the legations to comply with it. Some of the questions that Holyoake proposed—such

as : "What is the standard of skill among native artisans with whom the Englishman would have to compete? Do they put their character into their work, or are they without artisan pride?"—were too characteristic for the ordinary official, but the "People's Blue Books" that were produced after 1869 were very useful and informing. Large numbers of Holyoake's impetuous friends of the forties had spread over the globe, when the reaction came, and he knew their struggles.

When the practice was welcomed by the press, another journalist claimed credit for the scheme, but Lord Clarendon, at least, made it clear that he was acting on Holyoake's letter. His instruction to the legations began : "Mr. Holyoake has made a valuable suggestion as to the steps to be taken to ascertain the facts as regards the position of the artisan and industrial classes in foreign States," and he submitted his instruction to Holyoake before he sent it. He added that he "would be happy to consider any suggestions that Mr. Holyoake might have to offer as to any other matters connected with foreign countries in which the industrial classes in this country take an interest." Some years later Holyoake received a grant from Government to conduct inquiries himself in America.

In the same year, 1869, Holyoake saw a Bill brought into the House in which he took a peculiar interest. This was the "Evidence Amendment Bill," proposing to substitute an affirmation for an oath in the case of conscientious objectors. I have already indicated the serious injustice that non-Christians incurred when their consciences forbade them to repeat the Christian formula. Many a criminal escaped conviction,<sup>1</sup> and many a sensitive

<sup>1</sup> It is related in Francis's *History of the Bank of England* that a man who robbed it of £10,000 escaped because the essential witness against him could not take the oath.

man remained a virtual outlaw, through the retention of the oath long after large numbers of men had ceased to believe in it. Freethinkers were divided on the subject of taking it, as we saw. Holyoake had throughout his whole life set his face sternly against any insincere repetition of the formula. It has been said by one of his critics that his strict opposition to it only began when Mr. Bradlaugh was found to take the oath in court without hesitation. This statement is wholly wrong. His public career opened with a vehement protest against the making of a Christian declaration by Owenite colleagues, and the grave sacrifices he then accepted, by rebelling against the direction of his chiefs, were repeated many times. When he came to London after his imprisonment he wished to work his way into the legal profession through a clerkship. Mr. Ashurst was more than willing to find room for him, but he had to point out that Holyoake's refusal to take an oath closed that career against him. Several times he forfeited money for the same cause. On one occasion, when he was called up for jury-service, he offered to repeat the formula if the court would take note that he was not affirming a belief in God. There would assuredly be no insincerity in that, but it was a virtual refusal to take the oath and serve, and he had to pay a fine of ten pounds. Once—and once only—his brother Austin took the oath in the interest of their business; but Austin was a man of obscure and very independent (if not theistic) views at that time, and the circumstances were extremely irritating, as we saw. Usually Holyoake had some Christian man in his employment who could give legal testimony with perfect sincerity.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Some of his more determined critics have actually censured this! It need hardly be said that he did not regard the taking of an oath as an evil in itself, but only when taken by an atheist.

Partly from his knowledge of the injustice suffered—he collected an astounding bundle of cases from the press—and partly from a sense of shame at seeing Free-thinkers take the oath, he worked assiduously for the amendment of the law. We have seen him drawing up petitions and collecting subscriptions, securing the support of men like Colenso, and working with men like Sir John Trelawny. Sir John told him that his pamphlets on the subject (*The Outlaws of Freethought*, etc.) had made a great impression in the House. He induced the Radical leader, Mr. Roebuck, to work for it; and the other chief worker in Parliament, Mr. Conyngham, was a friend of his. When, in August 1869, an "Evidence Amendment Bill" was quietly introduced, it passed both Houses in a comparatively short time. "You may justly take to yourself a good share of the credit of having brought things up to that pass," J. S. Mill wrote to Holyoake. It was easy for Mr. Bradlaugh in the following year to secure a "Further Evidence Amendment Act," making the earlier one clearer and extending it to other cases.

That Holyoake was moved by an honest feeling for sincerity, not by that mysterious "hatred" of Christian forms with which a critic is so often charged, is clear from many instances we have seen. An experience of this period is not without interest in many ways. One of his friendly correspondents was the young Lord Amberley, who had asked Mr. Clay to introduce him to Holyoake at the House. Mill had spoken with great praise of Lord Amberley, and he was one of the men on whom Holyoake relied. Early in 1870 Holyoake invited him, at the request of the Cowens, to contest Newcastle in the Liberal interest at the next election. Lord Amberley seems to have consented, but he expressed scruples to Holyoake when Cowen

invited him to lay the foundation of a Nonconformist school at Newcastle. Holyoake's reply was lightly phrased, but illustrates his attitude on such matters :

"MY DEAR LORD AMBERLEY,

"I can well understand that a gentleman may entertain an esoteric objection to the peculiar ceremony proposed for your performance in the north ; but it never occurred to me that an exoteric one might exist. It has seemed to me that, as genius is without sex, nobility is without creed. It recognises without sharing the convictions of the importunate. I have understood that, in order to equalise human destiny, one conspicuous penalty was imposed upon patrician dignity—that of being subject to Church and Chapel Sunday-School Committees ; and that, while we humbler sinners atoned for our faults in sack-cloth and ashes, loftier offenders expiated theirs in laying foundation stones. . . ."

So far from entertaining an unreasonable prejudice, Holyoake very frequently attended a church or chapel, when he was in a fresh town or near the home of some distinguished preacher. In one respect, indeed, he was probably unique amongst militant Freethinkers—in the number of cordial friendships he had with clergymen and the terms in which they spoke of him. The education-controversy, which became acute in 1869 and 1870, brought him into frequent contact with the clergy. Holyoake, it need hardly be said, was for universal, free, and secular education, but his positive and social concern for education was as earnest as his wish to see it secularised. He was himself essentially a teacher, and his addresses at educational congresses were always heard with respect. After he had spoken at Birmingham in 1869, the Rev. Septimus Hansard publicly thanked him for his "religious speech," and a Unitarian clergyman supported the phrase. In the

same town, in the previous year, Archdeacon Sandford—the newspaper-report says—"candidly admitted that he had learnt political science from Mr. Holyoake, and only wished that, in return, Mr. Holyoake would allow him to give him some lessons in theology."<sup>1</sup>

Of the education-struggle itself it is not necessary to say much here. We have, in fact, now reached a point where the more stirring scenes in which Holyoake moved are within the memory of our generation, and we may refrain from giving the ampler account that earlier movements demanded. The year 1870 is sometimes described as the date of the third great wave of progressive feeling in Europe. It was certainly a year in whose calendar many events were written in letters of gold by men like Holyoake. The Empire of Napoleon III fell with a crash, and France set up its third and final Republic. The withdrawal of the French troops from Rome left the papacy defenceless, and the Italian troops marched exultantly into the city. Thus two of Holyoake's causes were brought to a successful close. But England had made such advance since 1848 that the echo of continental revolution failed to stir it in 1870. Republicans were active, it is true. A handbill of the year calls on working men to attend "the Republican Demonstration in Trafalgar Square" in their thousands (on Sept. 19th) and "raise the Cry of Long Live the Republic." They met on the Monday evening, after work, in dramatic panoply. The "Men of Finsbury" joined the "Friends from the East-End" on Clerkenwell Green, "with Military Bands and Banners." They picked up the "Italian Republicans" at Hatton Garden, and marched with the "French Republicans" and

<sup>1</sup> About this time Holyoake was approached by the "Society for the Liberation of Religion from State Patronage," and asked to write for them a pamphlet on the question: "What good does the Church do to the State?"

"South London Friends" into the Square, and made nervous folks' blood run cold with Gallic phrases. But there was no Wellington to take them seriously. The Georges had long disappeared, and Queen Victoria had gently disarmed Republicanism. Holyoake still—and always—considered a republic the just form of government, but there was no longer an acute need of the reform.

Two great ideals now seemed to him to call for the devotion of thoughtful men. Political power had been won. With the last extension of the franchise the people had obtained the means of making their will effective. The broad reforms that were now needed were, firstly, such alleviation of industrial conditions that something like real cultivation of the general mind and character would be possible; and, secondly, the efficient imparting of this cultivation. For the first change he looked to Co-operation, for the second to the framing of a national system of elementary schools and such diffusion of knowledge amongst adult workers as could be achieved. New groups of men who, from one cause or other, promised great aid in the work, had now come into public life. The Christian Socialists had had a very salutary influence on the clergy. The new statesmen, of the type of Gladstone and Bright, were more or less sensitive to the stigma of there being so large a proportion of ignorance and debasement in the land. Scientific men—the newest group of all—were eager to kindle thought in the mass of the workers. The situation is reflected in a handbill of a meeting that took place in January 1869, to promote a Workmen's International Exhibition in 1870. On that bill Holyoake's name is found in association with those of Gladstone, Bright, Mundella, Huxley, Norman Lockyer, Tyndall, the Duke of Rutland, the Duke of Argyll, and

many others. There seemed to be a golden prospect of the mental improvement of the masses, and with that much would be gained.

But the pressing reform was the construction of a national system of education, and all social students were looking anxiously to Mr. Forster and the Liberal Government. Holyoake still belonged to the Birmingham Education League, and throughout 1870 he addressed large audiences in the interest of free, compulsory, and secular education.<sup>1</sup> At Norwich, in January, he had 1,200 hearers. Sixty-five years after the first great agitation for elementary schools there were still vast numbers of children without teachers. At Liverpool only 30,000 children out of 90,000 attended school: at Manchester only 25,000 out of 60,000. Two-fifths of the nation's children, between the ages of six and ten, had no education whatever. Thoughtful people were now agreed that a complete scheme of schools was needed, but the eternal religious difficulty confronted statesmen. The situation was so closely parallel to that of 1906, and is still so well remembered, that I need not enlarge on it. Holyoake confirms the view that the Nonconformists were more ready to accept secular education in 1870 than in 1906. He relates that a deputation of 300 Nonconformist clergymen waited upon Mr. Forster at Downing Street. Forster seemed to his friends to be favouring the Church unduly against the

<sup>1</sup> Mr. Jesse Collings was secretary of the League, and wrote him late in 1869: "We regard your advocacy as of so much importance that your proposition is assented to with much pleasure." The chief difficulty was that, though the Birmingham League was for "unsectarian education," it could not agree to oppose Bible-lessons. "There are many here," Mr. Collings wrote, "who would prefer a sweeping secular measure, but, knowing that such is not the scheme of the League, they recognise in our movement a great advance." Mr. Chamberlain was, we shall see, for the "sweeping secular measure"—for, as he put it, "wresting education out of the hands of priests of all shades."



Dissenters, and, when they pressed their claims, he asked the clergymen—confidently expecting a denial—if they were prepared to have education without the Bible. Holyoake says there was “an immediate and general response ‘without.’”

How Forster ignored the indication, and adopted the compromise of Bible-lessons in the Board Schools, is well known. Holyoake knew Forster—had been entertained by him several times—and his opinion of Forster's much-discussed attitude at that time is of interest. Forster had gravely offended him in 1864, but they were afterwards reconciled, and Forster made noble amends in connection with Holyoake's annuity. Holyoake maintains that ambition is the chief key to his actions.

“Ambition was stronger in him than any other sentiment. Humanity and liberal principles were, to the end of his days, characteristic of him, and he preferred advancing his personal ascendancy by these means; but they had not the personal dominion over him that ambition had.”<sup>1</sup>

His “ambition to serve the ends of the Church” was increased, Holyoake thought, by his marriage with Dr. Arnold's daughter. But he adds a further consideration that is, perhaps, more instructive. Forster sometimes attended the meetings at which Holyoake spoke, and was impressed with the number of people in sympathy with Secularism. “He was then quite resolved, should he attain power, that the authority of the State Church should be the agent of national religious instruction.” He expressed his feeling to Holyoake before 1864, but Holyoake hints that he was less frank with the Radicals of Bradford, and the secular educationists generally, and so brought trouble upon himself. Recommending that

<sup>1</sup> *Sixty Years*, II, 126.

no reporters should be present, he spoke to a small group of his chief supporters on education before he entered the Cabinet. They all believed that he intended to work for secular education, and, when they afterwards found him doing the reverse, they put an unpleasant interpretation on his objection to there being a written record of his words. Holyoake merely observes that Forster was "a man of truth," but strongly censures his methods. One seems to discern that Holyoake's interesting chapter on him is affected by the affront of 1864 on the one hand and the generous action of 1875 on the other. Equilibrium has not been quite attained.

The education-question, on its religious side, was settled by a compromise that—for all its newness of name—had been tried and had failed many times previously. But it was something that a national system of elementary education had at last been decreed, and Holyoake counted it a great step in social progress. Few other political episodes appear in his calendar in the seventies. Toward the close of 1871 he obtained a knighthood for the elder Mr. Cowen. Through Stansfeld and Bright he had representations made to Gladstone, and the Prime Minister consented. Stansfeld asked in astonishment whether the Republican Cowen would accept the distinction. It was a confusion between the younger and older Cowen. The son was a strong Republican at that time, and refused a title that was afterwards offered to him; but the father was a royalist, and appreciated the honour. On account of the state of his health he asked Holyoake to have the knighthood gazetted, without his appearing at Court, and again Holyoake succeeded. I find many applications to him at the time that assume he has influence. One curious letter—from a solicitor—begs him to see the Attorney General, and ask if a remorseful client, who has cheated the Revenue, will be

undisturbed if he pays the money. Holyoake got the desired assurance.

A more interesting event of 1871 was the exposure of what he calls "the Scott-Russell Plot." Mr. Scott-Russell, the constructor of the *Great Eastern*, put out a remarkable social scheme—almost Socialistic in its generosity—and invited a number of working-men representatives to take it up. Social schemes were common enough, but Mr. Scott-Russell told them that his programme had the effective support of Lord Derby, Lord Salisbury, Mr. Disraeli, and a number of peers and Conservative politicians. Those he invited met for discussion in a comfortable tavern, over comfortable dinners, and planned the new homes, schools, markets, etc., that were to be provided by the State, the reduction of hours, the nationalisation of the railways, and so on. The millennium was coming in too quickly for Holyoake and his friend Mr. R. Applegarth (one of the invited workers), and the injunction to keep the list of peers secret was disquieting. They confided the new scheme to the press, and it quickly vanished. All the peers and politicians whose names had been given repudiated Mr. Scott-Russell, and he passed into obscurity as a social reformer—except for the fame that Holyoake's amusing chapter gives to the occurrence.

But after 1870 interest in Holyoake's career passes once more from politics to Co-operative and Secularist affairs, and we may glance first at the latter. We left the subject at a point when Mr. Bradlaugh was dividing the leadership of the organisation that Holyoake had created. Whatever may be thought of Mr. Bradlaugh's ambition, it must be said that his rise to power in the Secularist body was inevitable. His great gifts—his commanding voice, impassioned oratory, and powerful frame—destined him for leadership in any small field of

popular agitation that he entered. Holyoake had greater qualities of character and intelligence, but his influence and attraction lay rather with a more cultivated class. Further, as I have said previously, Bradlaugh's conception of their work was more convincing to the majority of the Secularists. In point of fact, attack upon theological beliefs *was* their chief and distinctive concern ; and they felt that Holyoake's idea of Secularism, as a broad and positive concern for the things of this world, was *too* broad to take practicable shape and too common to be distinctive. Whether Mr. Bradlaugh was right in clinging to the name Secularist is another matter.

By 1870 the movement was prosperous, and attracted much attention. A hostile article on "The New Secular Crusade" in the Liverpool *Porcupine* takes Holyoake as its chief representative, and calls him "one of the ablest, most uncompromising, least personally offensive, and most sincere of Secularist lecturers and writers." About the same date the New York *World* had a very lengthy article on Secularism, entirely identifying it with Holyoake. "Never have I met," says its London correspondent, "a more interesting man, or one more full of varied knowledge, or with a more pleasant way of communicating it. Although I differ from him widely as the poles on some of the questions which he has devoted a lifetime to solve, I listened to his lucid, candid, and logical explanations and arguments with ever-increasing delight, and parted from him each day with a higher opinion of the sweetness of his character and the strength of his mind." This estimate of Holyoake, and the identification of Secularism with him, were now common in the press. Yet there can be little doubt that Bradlaugh's influence was far greater than his in the Secularist body. Bradlaugh had founded the National Secular Society, and was its President (with the exception

of one year) to the end. Some writers have represented that this was the first organisation of Freethinkers, but we saw how erroneous this is. Ten years before Bradlaugh founded it there were twenty or thirty Secular Societies in the country, meeting in annual Conferences, and contributing to the maintenance of a common Institute at London.

In 1870 several efforts were made to bring about more satisfactory relations between the two leaders. In view of the complete diversity of their gifts and characters and associations, and their honest difference of opinion as to work and procedure, these attempts were bound to miscarry. The first effort seems to have been peculiarly unwise. They were induced to hold a public debate in the London Hall of Science (in Old Street) in March. On the first night Holyoake was to defend the thesis that "The principles of Secularism do not include Atheism," and on the second night that "Secular criticism does not involve Scepticism." A debate on definitions was bound to be inconclusive, and the thin nervous voice and finer argumentation of Holyoake must have seemed, to such an audience, at a disadvantage beside the masterful rhetoric of Bradlaugh. The debate has been published, with the title *Secularism, Scepticism, and Atheism*. It is not of good quality, nor, on the whole, is it pleasant reading. Both disputants are enfeebled by an inevitable nervousness. They are polite to each other, however: though in the end Holyoake reminds Bradlaugh that he came into the vineyard at the eleventh hour, and Bradlaugh makes much of the work done since his arrival.

The experience must have made clear to Holyoake the fundamental nature of their difference, so that when Mr. Charles Watts, who had now joined the body, wrote a little later to offer him a Vice-Presidentship of the

National Secular Society he curtly declined. In itself the proposal that he should play second fiddle so palpably in the movement he had created was not alluring. "Since," Holyoake replied, "the Secular Society upon whose behalf you write inculcates that Atheism is identical with Secularism, I could not take the office of Vice-President in it without confusing the public mind (so far as it may notice the matter) as to the essential difference between Secularism and Atheism which I deem it so important to keep clear." Some years later he accepted the offer, under pressure from his friends; though he had quickly to resign it again. The wiser course for him in the circumstances was to remain outside the National Secular Society.

In the course of the year, however, he learned that there was a great deal of discontent in the Secular Society, and the question of having a second organisation was forced on him. In the winter he visited Scotland, where he had made so many pleasant tours. To his great mortification he now found many halls closed against him. The City Hall was withheld at Perth, although 250 reputable townsmen, including several clergymen, petitioned the Lord Provost to let him have it. At Dundee the Unitarians refused the usual hire of their school-room. At Glasgow the City Hall was closed against him.<sup>1</sup> The Scotch Secularists told him that this was the result of Mr. Bradlaugh's lectures, and they wrote him again later to complain that Mr. Bradlaugh

<sup>1</sup> While he was at Glasgow Holyoake received a challenge to a debate from an obscure champion, who promised "satisfactory testimonials" as to his "ability and respectability," and thought it absurd for a Republican to ask more. Holyoake answered:

"SIR,

"Your letter must be addressed to me in mistake. It is a challenge, and I am neither a prize-fighter nor a gladiator. I was told in Glasgow that if you sent your letter to Mr. Kelly, secretary of a branch of the National Secular Society, and furnish him with your size and weight, you would hear something to your advantage."

refused to insert in the *National Reformer* their account of Holyoake's visit. From Leicester, where there was a strong and admirable group under the lead of Mr. Josiah Gimson and Mr. Michael Wright, he heard fresh complaints and further promises of support to himself. Finally a group of Secularists in Lancashire and Yorkshire wrote to him to suggest the resuscitation of the *Reasoner*, as the organ of those who preferred his broader conception of the Secularist ideal. After some correspondence they formed a financial committee to protect him against any possible loss in connection with it.

It is these events that led to the revival of the *Reasoner* in January 1871, as the monthly organ of his followers. It was printed by the Manchester Co-operative Printing Society, and half the paper was devoted to Co-operation. Naturally, it fell between the two stools; especially as the Co-operators had their new and able organ, the *Co-operative News*, by September 1871. Captain (later Admiral) Maxse wrote of it as an "excellent publication." "I hope you will allow me," he said, "as a very small and inadequate expression of my sympathy with the movement as well as of my admiration for the untiring energy, industry, and talent you devote to the cause of Freethought and Progress to make good by the enclosed cheque" some deficit that was announced. Mr. Allsop, Mr. Coningham, and others, were not less complimentary; but the circulation was small, and it ceased with the July number (1872). The chief effect of the venture was to foster the ill-repressed irritation in the movement, which we shall find coming to a head in a few years. Before that time, however, a number of incidents occurred that illustrate Holyoake's position in one way or other.

One of the contrasts between Bradlaugh and Holyoake

is curiously illustrated in their relations with the clergy. We have already seen many instances of Holyoake's friendly relations with them, and many more occur during the seventies. On one occasion (in 1874) he dined with Archbishop Manning at the invitation of Mr. Knowles, editor (at that time) of the *Contemporary*. On another occasion he cheerfully accepted an invitation to meet "General Booth" at dinner, though the "General" failed to come. In 1874 he sent a memorial to Dean Stanley with a request for his signature. "I do not often sign petitions," the Dean answered, "but this seems to be so worthy that—even although solicited—I gladly sign it; and not the less gladly because it comes to me from yourself."

Occasionally he had correspondence with bishops of the Established Church, and, though one can look for no cordiality in this, one often finds respect. The Bishop of Gloucester was very amiable in acknowledging a paper that Holyoake sent him in 1870. In 1872 he heard the Bishop of Peterborough (Dr. Magee) attack Secularism in Norwich Cathedral, and wrote to ask the bishop to use his influence in the letting of a hall at Norwich for a reply. Dr. Magee's chivalry did not go so far as that, and Holyoake was disappointed at his courteous evasions. A Dissenter of the town had offered to let him have a hall "if he knew it would not displease the Bishop." I find, however, a pleasanter letter to him from Dr. Magee at an earlier date (April 1870), which he seems to have overlooked. "I desire," the bishop says, "to do the fullest justice to the motives of opponents like yourself, and am glad to think that you can do the like justice to mine." In 1872, also, he had some correspondence with the Bishop of Oxford. Dr. Wilberforce had attacked the Oddfellows in the House of Lords in 1852 for having lectures written by



an atheist. The Grand Master of the Order asked him to read them (which he confessed he had not done), and, when he found their perfect neutrality as to theology and their excellent quality, he withdrew his charges. In 1872 Holyoake brought to the notice of the Bishop a grievance of the poor villagers against their Vicar in some part of his diocese (Gawcott). He wrote with little confidence, but Dr. Wilberforce had the matter investigated and justly arranged.

In the same year Holyoake had an adventure at Brighton of which he has given an amusing account in his *Sixty Years* (ch. xcvii—reprinted from the *Newcastle Chronicle* of the time). Holyoake was, as usual, attending the meeting of the British Association. Amongst the scientific men who came over from France to attend it was Holyoake's friend, W. de Fonvielle, whose brother Ulric had been shot by Prince Pierre Napoleon. As they stood on the platform the ex-Emperor entered, and was received with great deference, much to the disgust of the French. Napoleon knew De Fonvielle's feeling towards him, and watched his movements anxiously. In the middle of the President's address there was some whispering between De Fonvielle and a neighbour, and the Frenchman hurried from the room. He returned presently, in great agitation, with a small oval parcel—"about the size of an Orsini bomb"—which he showed to his neighbour, and then stuck in his own pocket. The dumb-show probably had a suspicion of tragedy for the ex-Emperor, but it was really a small comedy. The clergyman who sat near De Fonvielle took him to be an attendant, and asked him to go to the address of a "Mr. Glaisher" with a note. Glaisher happened to be the name of a former colleague whom De Fonvielle had long sought, and he went with alacrity. To his great indignation he found that he had been sent to a chemist's

shop for a box of throat-lozenges, in the very middle of the presidential speech ! The explanation never reached Napoleon, who may have dwelt on the strange passage when the ex-Empress pressed him to leave at once and he did so. In any case Holyoake's friend had hastened his departure. He found Napoleon described in the list of foreign visitors as "Emperor of the French" (two years after Sedan), and he and others made stormy protests. The aged Allsop wrote gaily to ask Holyoake why he had missed shooting Napoleon. What he really did was to protect Napoleon from offence, urging on De Fonvielle and others that he was "the guest of the nation." He wrote also to Stanley the explorer, who spoke at the meeting, to thank him for avoiding some obvious opportunity to give offence to Napoleon. He seems to have been acquainted with Stanley, as Hallett of Brighton, and S. Timmins of Birmingham, write to ask him to induce Stanley to lecture for them.

The following year (1873) was marked chiefly by the death of John Stuart Mill. The reader has learned enough from the letters I have quoted about the relations of Mill and Holyoake, nor is this an occasion for dilating on Mill's character and powers. There is, however, an episode that occurred after Mill's death that calls for some notice. Mr. A. Hayward, Q.C., wrote in the *Times* an article on Mill that contained unpleasant reflections on his character in earlier years. The Rev. Stopford Brooke commented severely on the article in the course of his sermon on the following Sunday, and received a letter from Hayward that purported to support his reflections. The letter was also sent to the *Times*, but that journal refused to insert it, and Hayward then had it printed, and copies sent to a large number of people. Amongst others Gladstone received a copy, and he was so moved by it that he

refused to subscribe to the fund for raising a memorial to Mill.

Most of Mill's friends decided to treat the matter with silent contempt. Holyoake, however, was one of those who felt that reticence in the presence of imputations is generally unwise. The problem is a delicate one, especially where there is a large amount of fact in the imputation, and one has to weigh the chances of recommending a favourable or mitigating aspect of them against the certainty of giving a much wider publicity to the facts themselves. Holyoake wrote a pamphlet in Mill's defence (*John Stuart Mill, as the Working Classes Knew Him*)—chiefly, he says somewhere, in the hope of altering Gladstone's feeling. But the pamphlet does not embody all the material he had; and as he has noticed the subject at some length in his last work (*Bygones Worth Remembering*), and other recent writers have dealt with it, with less discrimination, it is advisable to reopen it here.

Hayward's charges were, in substance, that Mill was, in his youth, an ardent advocate of free love and of the use of preventives of conception. Mill, he said, had got into trouble with the police for distributing copies of a free-love pamphlet, and for casting directions on the use of restrictives into servants' areas. Mr. Christie, in the pamphlet he wrote at the time, strongly denies that Mill himself came into collision with the police. Mill was, he says, one of a group of youths some of whom were distributing this literature when the police interfered. On the other hand, Stopford Brooke wrote to Holyoake:

"The letters in the 'Examiner' [quoted by Hayward] *do not exist at all*, but I believe Mill was, when a boy of 18 [in 1824], taken up by the police—at Wimbledon, I think—for being one of a few young men who were dispensing some instructions for cohabitation without

results. From what I hear, this is true. It is one of the foolish things enthusiastic boys do. . . ."

It seems to me quite immaterial to settle whether Mill was aiding in the distribution of the pamphlet or no.<sup>1</sup> Indeed, the whole question of the opinions he held in his immature days seems hardly worth discussing, and Gladstone, who from his own knowledge of him in mature years called him "the saint of Rationalism," pushed moral delicacy to strange lengths in allowing these stories to influence him. The more interesting question is, whether Mill retained these ideas to any extent in his later years.

When the trouble arose in 1873 Holyoake wrote that he had, at a much earlier date, received a letter from Mill emphatically repudiating the opinions of his youth. Mr. Christie at once begged him for a copy of this all-important letter, and Holyoake replied that he had returned it at the time. He must certainly have received some kind of retraction from Mill.

The curious point is that, though I know he returned a number of letters to Mill, these letters were regarded by him as compromising, rather than exculpating, Mill. In a manuscript note, dated Nov. 22nd, 1848, he writes :

"Returned several letters to Mill, being liable to apprehension they might fall into the hands of the authorities, thinking Mr. Mill would not like his correspondence to be read by them. Of course, I could have destroyed the letters, but I returned them to him that he might be sure they were not liable to get into alien hands."

<sup>1</sup> As the story grew, it came to be stated that Mill was the author of a book on the subject entitled *What is Love?* That is a patent absurdity. Mr. Christie and Professor Bain attribute it to Richard Carlile, and Bain adds that he heard on good authority that Francis Place "assisted in its composition." Bain admired his pamphlet, but held that Mill was actually taking part in the distribution of the Malthusian literature when he was apprehended by the police, and that he never abandoned his inner conviction on that point.

He refers to these letters in his pamphlet on Mill (p. 26). Letters that needed to be kept away from the "authorities" were in some way very heterodox; though I can imagine that Holyoake was hypersensitive at the time. Their character seems to be shown in a letter of 1848, and half a letter of 1847, that Holyoake preserved. The 1848 letter I have already quoted (Vol. I, p. 339). The torn half of the 1847 letter runs :

"Of practical conclusions there are also several from which I should decidedly differ, particularly Communism.

"The use made of the word 'morality' is likely to give an idea of much greater agreement with the ordinary moral notions, emanating from and grounded on religion, than I should suppose you intend. Most people do not understand by morality a subject as open to discussion as any other, and on which persons have different opinions, but think it a name for the set of opinions they have been accustomed to."

In the letter of 1848, the reader will remember, Mill speaks of "the present constitution of the family and the whole of the priestly morality founded on it" as "intolerant, slavish, and selfish." He is not speaking of its economic aspect, because he assumes that he "differs fundamentally" from Holyoake. And at the close of the letter he adds: "It was quite unnecessary to return my notes, as it is a matter of complete indifference to me whom they are seen by."

These interesting fragments suggest that Mill was still ethically heterodox in his forty-second year. It is true that in his *Autobiography* (p. 167) he speaks again of the institution of the family as needing "more fundamental alterations than remain to be made in any other great social institution," but here it may well be held that he refers to its social or economic aspects. He

is praising the St. Simonians and their declaration of "the perfect equality of man and woman." They were agreed as to the economic change, but differed radically as to moral relaxation. However, that is a subject for students of Mill. I am concerned only with those letters of his to Holyoake which throw some light on his ethical development. I give them without hesitation, as Mill's character was by that time, if not always, one of recognised solidity. How long he retained those opinions on theoretic morality I have not to determine. He certainly always retained his view of the morality of restricting families, in which Holyoake fully concurred. But in his later years, at least, Mill did no more than advise that the date of marriage should be postponed. In his pamphlet on Mill Holyoake says (p. 15): "Mr. Mill always confined himself to advising deferred marriages, and so strongly did he hold this view that he fiercely assailed any who by accident or ignorance imputed to him complicity with any other suggestion." Mr. Stopford Brooke and Professor Bain are likely to have been better informed, and they hold that in his early years Mill advocated the deliberate restriction of families by artificial means. But he only wrote one short and not very clear paragraph on the subject. To this paragraph Holyoake adduced a parallel from the Rev. Dr. Jowett's introduction to the Republic: and the paragraph was supplied to Holyoake (I gather from his letter) by the Rev. Stopford Brooke! It must, in face of Mill's explicit and insistent assurance, be admitted that he never wished to advocate the use of artificial restrictions in any passage of his works. The letters I have quoted are mainly of interest on the broader question of conjugal relations. On this question he clearly retained unpopular views.

In concluding I give a letter or two on Holyoake's

pamphlet. There is no acknowledgment from Gladstone, for whom it was chiefly intended, but Lord Derby and Lord Salisbury acknowledged it with great friendliness, and Salisbury entered the list of subscriptions for the Mill memorial with a cheque for £50. Mr. Arthur Arnold found it "most interesting," but not quite accurate and not convincing on the chief and most delicate point. He thought Mr. Christie's pamphlet "most deplorable." Dean Stanley wrote a fine letter :

"DEAR SIR,

"On my return from a few weeks on the continent on Monday I got your tract on Mr. Mill, with its kind superscription. You must allow me to express my sense of the courtesy which directed your words, and also the great interest with which I have read the tract itself. It is needless to speak of the differences which, I presume, exist between us, but I cannot help entertaining the hope, inspired by such expressions as both now and on other occasions I have heard or read in relation to yourself, that the day may come, perhaps is now come, when the different classes or institutions of the country will be brought into closer understanding with each other, and when party spirit will cease to express the estranging and destructive influence that has so often embittered both our sympathies and antipathies.

"Believe me to be

"Yours very faithfully,

"A. P. STANLEY."

Lastly, I quote Mr. J. Morley, who was then editing the *Fortnightly*. The manuscript of the pamphlet was first sent to him for insertion, and he replied :

"July 14, 1873.

"DEAR MR. HOLYOAKE,

"I have read your paper with the most genuine interest and admiration. But on the whole I think it

comes too late for the 'Fortnightly'—because the readers of that have already had a funeral oration on our illustrious friend. Yours is admirable for its precision of phrase—and it is interesting for the new side of Mill which it presents to us younger friends of his. But, once more, it is too late for *us*. Wherever it appears, it must rank among the three or four éloges of Mill which are truly worthy of the theme. . . .

"I wish you could be induced to write for me an autobiographical chapter or two in the history of British bigotry. Why should you not?

"Yours very truly,

"JOHN MORLEY."

Mr. Morley's estimate of the pamphlet will probably be accepted, but so, probably, will that of Mr. Arthur Arnold. On the point that especially inspired the writing of it, it is not wholly convincing. One wonders to-day whether it would not have been better to have taken a bolder line. Mr. Gladstone did not think less of St. Augustine for the deeds of his adolescence. It is remarkable that so balanced a judge should allow the discovery of early laxity on Mill's part—a laxity purely theoretical in its nature, and repudiated in mature years—to weigh against the sterling character he knew. Certainly, the essential difference between wilful rebellion against a recognised law and honest challenge of the ground or utility of that law was not sufficiently pressed by Mill's friends. Ethical intolerance of opinions is not much less regrettable than theological.



## CHAPTER XIX

### SOCIAL AND EDUCATIONAL WORK

To understand much of Holyoake's work in the Co-operative and Secularist and other movements in the seventies it is imperative to bear in mind the social position he had reached. By his sixtieth birthday he found himself moving in a circle that lay far beyond the most soaring dreams of the young worker of forty years before. Little more than thirty years had passed since he left his native town, penniless and almost unknown, and wrote in his diary that "if he starved in a London garret he would not be without illustrious precedents." Now, in spite of his sturdy persistence in outspoken heresy and his insistence on the cause of the workers, he was welcomed in some of the most brilliant groups in London. He breakfasted occasionally with Gladstone, dined often with Chamberlain, Morley, Dilke, Woolner, Knowles, and Tennyson, and corresponded with everybody. I reserve the more interesting letters he has preserved for a future chapter, and will merely give a general idea of his position and work.

A ceremonious card, bearing a date close to his sixtieth birthday, has the inscription: "The Mayor of Birmingham [Mr. Chamberlain] requests the honour of the company of Mr. G. J. Holyoake at dinner at the Queen's Hotel to meet the Right Honorable W. E. Gladstone, M.P." It is a comprehensive indication of the recognition he had won, prophet as he was, in his

own country. Mr. Jesse Collings was a warm friend of his; Mr. Chamberlain a frequent and flattering correspondent. Prominent Birminghamians sought his influence at London, and archdeacons proclaimed themselves his pupils. Mr. S. Timmins, for instance, a well-known Birmingham merchant, sought through him of Sir W. Gregory the position—the imaginary position, as it proved—of consul for Ceylon. Mr. Timmins was a friend, and when Holyoake again talked of contesting Birmingham (in 1873), he wrote him a confidential letter that has interest to-day :

“ . . . As to our politics here, I think you are misinformed. There is no chance of the return of any working man. The ‘400’ are evidently well united, and will go for the three members as they are. There has been some talk of a W.M. member, and some meetings have been held. The movers (if they proceed at all) are determined to have a genuine W.M. of their own order. . . . In all the frankness of real friendship, you would not have any better nor perhaps so good a chance. . . . With the present constituency *and* the ballot you have no chance *here*. In fact we are in a devil of a state. If there should be any split among the Liberals, one, and I am almost certain, *two* Tories would be returned. The W.M. element, big strikes, etc., etc., have made very many of the less hearty Liberals pause, and many will, under cover of the ballot, vote against some of their own candidates. . . . In a single election there is nothing to fear; but this d—d three-cornered business and the ballot (which I never did approve), combined with the inertia of the masses of voters (at least one third won’t vote), seriously peril our prospects.”

How the Liberals were, in fact, routed is historical. All the malcontents (Timmins specifies “the Contagious Diseased people and the Alliance people” as chiefly

responsible) joined against Gladstone. Even Stopford Brooke called it "an alliance of Beer and Bible." But Holyoake must have smiled when he read that the adoption of the Ballot was fatal to his prospects. He had predicted as much.

A small selection of correspondence—reserving the letters of Gladstone and Chamberlain—will convey a sufficient idea of his movements in London. Mr. A. R. Cluer (the living London magistrate) writes, after looking over a few of his articles :

"MY DEAR MR. HOLYOAKE,

"I have only just had time to peruse the papers which you so kindly sent me, and which I return at once lest mishap should befall them in sunnier lands even than Italy. To praise them would be assumption and presumption ; but let me say this, that it has given me very keen pleasure to read and enjoy them. You touch nothing that you do not adorn and beautify. . . ."

Lady Trelawny in one of her many letters, says :

". . . It is very good of you to say you enjoyed our little party. For myself I can truly say that I feel it a great gain to have made the personal acquaintance of one for whom I have long entertained a very real respect and regard—even as an abstraction. . . ."

And again :

"Sir John begs me to thank you very much indeed for giving him the great pleasure afforded by the knowledge of your appreciation of his work. The sympathy of a judgment which he respects as he does yours is very precious."

Mr. Samuel Butler fell into correspondence with him in 1872 about *Erewhon*. "I trust my friends will not expect too much," he said, "for I have a strong suspicion that

*Erewhon* is about as good as anything I am capable of." In 1873 Holyoake, with other critics, fell into the error of attributing *Colymbria* to him, and Butler wrote :

"Will you allow me, in confidence, to say that I have had nothing whatever to do with it, and never so much as heard of the existence of the book till it had been published. I quite agree with you, however, in cordially liking the book, and am well pleased that you should have given me the credit of it. I don't wish to disclaim it publicly. The author and I understand one another on that point. He is a friend of mine, but I had no idea of what he was doing, and, *between you and me and the post*, the rivalry is too close for me not to be a trifle jealous, and not to wish that the form of the book had been different. However, it does not matter a straw, and I am not going to contradict the authorship of it as assigned to me, partly because the author wishes to lie hid, and is only too glad if the public is thrown on a wrong scent, and partly because it will throw the scent off my real book, 'The Fair Haven.' . . ."

Mrs. Lynn Linton, the novelist, ranged herself against his critics in 1872, and saw much of him. She had somewhat hastily married his earlier colleague (W. J. Linton) in 1858, but, though she was an Agnostic and Republican, his careless ways proved unbearable, and she separated from him. In the later sixties she began to modify her opinions on woman's work, and to use her journalistic skill against the "advanced women." Her criticisms provoked considerable excitement and many attacks, and she sought Holyoake's aid and advice in her defence. His conviction lay rather with her lady opponents, but his sense of justice and chivalry was with her. They had, moreover, much in common in regard to religion, politics, and co-operation. "What you have written to my knowledge has been grand and beautiful," she wrote in 1873. "When I return to

London," she wrote later, "I want to know more of the working men and their political life. Will you help me? And what I can do to help on your Co-operative Societies I will."

He dined often with Sir Charles and Lady Dilke, Sir J. Stansfeld, and at other houses where the talk sparkled. A note from the sculptor, Woolner, whom he met at Tennyson's, runs :

"DEAR MR. HOLYOAKE,

"Next Tuesday at seven o'clock, Grouse!—  
Will you come?

"Yours truly,

"T. WOOLNER."

He was much at Tennyson's, but as the chief object was to discuss Co-operative matters with Mrs. Tennyson, I reserve her letters to the next chapter. Mr. James Knowles counted him as a contributor to the *Contemporary* and as a personal friend. "An editor never pays compliments—they are too costly," he wrote to Holyoake; but it was only to give weight to his many compliments. In 1877 the *Contemporary* "passed into the hands of Samuel Morley and a few more strong Evangelicals" (Mr. Knowles wrote), and he designed the *Nineteenth Century*, which was christened by Mr. Tennyson.

"I earnestly wish," he said, "to be allowed to add your name to the list of my supporters. Will you do me the favour to permit this? . . . My object is to keep at least one absolutely free and open, unprejudiced and impartial, organ in the Press. I propose to keep the *Nineteenth Century* in my own hands so as to prevent any such interference with it as the *Contemporary* has now been subjected to. I can assure my friends the 'fair field and no favour' which it is the purpose of my life, almost, to secure for honest debate and discussion."

Trouble arose with Mr. A. Strahan, and Mr. Knowles submitted the matter to Holyoake, as well as to Huxley and Tyndall. Holyoake's letter "about Strahan and his libels" moved him.

"It is," he said, "one of the wisest and kindest I ever received in my life. If all my friends feel and think as you do, I can indeed afford to let Mr. Strahan write [I adopt Holyoake's shocked modification of the letter] till he is weary of it."

"I not only read all your letters," another note runs, "but pretty well anything else of yours—as and when I find it—and always with pleasure and advantage." Strahan had written in the meantime to secure Holyoake for the *Contemporary*! Holyoake pleasantly declined. He was by this time so familiar in the brilliant circle that supported Mr. Knowles and Mr. Morley that when the "Association of Liberal Thinkers" was started (in 1878), with Huxley as President, Holyoake was nominated Vice-President, together with Tyndall, Clifford, and Kalisch.

Older friends like F. Newman, Stansfeld, Allsop, etc., were still in constant correspondence. Newman's letters in 1875 have some interest in connection with the well-known champion of the agricultural labourer, Joseph Arch. In the spring of 1874 Holyoake had received a curious letter from a Mr. Sandwith, proposing that he should save Arch's life by kidnapping him and handing him over to the care of Mr. Sandwith! Holyoake showed the letter to Arch, who replied: "So long as I can stand on my feet, I must labour on." Francis Newman wrote in a different vein. He was working ardently himself in the labourer's cause, and was greatly incensed at Arch for silently looking on while "murderous attacks" were made on Gibson Ward.

He tells Holyoake it is "Henry Taylor who has twisted Joseph Arch away," and complains strongly of the attacks on himself by Lloyd Jones and Alexander Macdonald. Holyoake was still working in the Labour Representation League, and attended the dinner given in 1874 to the first Labour Members, T. Burt (a friend of his) and A. Macdonald.

His work during these years, after the second collapse of the *Reasoner*, consisted chiefly in lecturing for Co-operative, Secular, and other societies, and journalism. His American work was increased by a correspondence for the *Boston Globe*, and in 1875 he wrote a short article on the Anti-Corn Law League for a cyclopædia (*Johnson's American Cyclopædia*) that was being edited by the President of Columbia College. Bright revised the manuscript of the historical sketch for him, so that American readers may trust it. The pay was quite American. He asked, hesitatingly, four pounds, when Mr. Leland "produced a handful of sovereigns, and said: 'You had better take seven.'" The sketch is reproduced in his *Sixty Years* (chs. xcix and c). The many invitations I have quoted will show that he had now a high journalistic and literary repute. In addition to his four or five connections with the press, and his frequent articles in the magazines, he had two large works in preparation that promised success. The first volume of his *History of Co-operation in England* was published in 1875, and, in view of the great public interest in the growing movement, was welcomed. Taking the hints given him by Mr. Knowles, Mr. Morley, and others, he was also arranging material for his autobiography.

But his more prosperous course was overshadowed by illness from time to time through the seventies, and at last was gravely threatened. His general health was

poor, and his eyes suffered so much that he came at length to entertain the terrible prospect of blindness. Mr. Brudenell Carter—who speaks of his “pupils tied down by multiple adhesions”—very generously operated on him, and several physician-friends helped him, but he was long unable to do any work. No one at that time can have dreamed that three further decades of life and work lay before him. His friends thought merely of securing an annuity that would relieve his remaining years of financial anxiety. Mr. J. S. Storr, who only knew Holyoake by public repute, seems to have started the idea of a public subscription, and Major Bell, Mr. Morrison, Mr. George Anderson, Mr. Josiah Gimson, and other friends, at once undertook the collection. It realised a sum of £2,254. With the bulk of this an annuity of £100 was purchased, and some £500 was given to, or invested for, Holyoake.

Apart from the generosity of many of the givers (Mr. George Anderson gave £200), the breadth and character of the list of subscribers afforded Holyoake the deepest gratification. Mr. Bradlaugh collected £284 10s. through the *National Reformer*, a large sum in itself for so poor a body, and a pleasant augury.<sup>1</sup> Thirty or forty Co-operative Societies contributed, as did all the leading Co-operative workers (T. Hughes, W. Morrison, E. V. Neale, etc.). Their letters enhanced the value of their gifts. Huxley, Tyndall, and all his literary acquaintances and older friends appeared in the list, and a number of clergymen courageously put their names to

<sup>1</sup> In the previous year, 1874, Bradlaugh had raised £550 by collection for the widow of Austin Holyoake. Until his death in that year Austin had remained a close associate of Bradlaugh's. The printing and publishing business which had passed to him at the failure of the Fleet Street House was bought of the widow for £650, and entrusted (for the Secular body) to Mr. Charles Watts. It is curious to note that Mrs. Besant entered the Secular Society in the year of Austin Holyoake's death.



it. Mr. Forster, he found afterwards, was an anonymous giver of £20. In replying to his printed letter of thanks W. Morrison assured him that he had "felt very great satisfaction in having been connected with such a movement." A clergyman (Mr. C. Voysey) wrote, after reading it: "If it were not that you show yourself in your true colours, my pity for your misfortune might have overlaid my reverence for your character and your life."

I have referred to Mr. Bradlaugh's generous share in the testimonial, and spoken of it as a pleasant augury, but the events that quickly followed extinguished all hope of a reconciliation between the two men for a time. The collection for Holyoake was made in 1875, and Bradlaugh's prompt participation in it led to an interchange of courtesies. In the following year mutual friends brought the two men together, and (to use Bradlaugh's words) an *entente cordiale* was formed. In 1877, however, further trouble arose, and sent them wider apart than ever. Though I have ample material for writing a minute account of all these differences, it will be proper to treat them with due historical perspective. They are comparatively small episodes in such a career as Holyoake's. But as they do to some extent involve the question of character, and as inaccurate versions of them have been published, it would be unjust to him to omit them.

It must not be imagined that the two leaders of the Secularist body waged an incessant war. Only on a few occasions throughout their careers did they come in conflict. Habitually, each went his way with reticence and restraint, but the circumstance of their working in a common field led to occasional collisions (and occasional periods of co-operation), in a way that is familiar in all propagandist bodies. If in their earlier relations

Mr. Bradlaugh appears at a disadvantage, the reader must bear in mind the great difference in age and education between the two. Holyoake had lived with his parents until his twenty-first year, when he entered into life-companionship with a helpful and admirable woman. He had had in his youth Unitarian teachers of great competence, and for twenty years he had to cut an almost solitary and laborious path for himself—a sobering experience. Bradlaugh, on the contrary, was “driven from home” and “alone in the world” (to use his daughter’s words) at the age of sixteen: he had had the slenderest and crudest of educations, at a Sunday School and a National School: he was driven by distress into the barracks, and he contracted a marriage which is described in his biography as ending unhappily. It would be ludicrous to expect a parity of character when this young man of twenty-four, with such antecedents, first encounters the mature and experienced man of forty. And these differences—especially the difference in social position—must be borne in mind throughout by those who would intelligently follow the relations of the two men.

I have narrated how they had a public discussion in 1870 that brought them no nearer agreement. In 1871 the *Scotsman* expressed its surprise that Holyoake had been found at certain revolutionary meetings in London, and Holyoake explained, without reflecting on him, that it was his brother Austin (now a close colleague of Bradlaugh’s) who had attended the meetings. Bradlaugh wrote him impetuously in regard to this letter, but Holyoake replied politely, and shortly afterwards was invited by Bradlaugh to contribute to the *National Reformer*. In 1874, when Northampton was contested for Bradlaugh during his absence in America, Holyoake offered his services to Mr. Gurney and the committee, but they replied, in a grateful letter, that

they were "well fortified." Then came the testimonial of 1875, and a friendly correspondence. In the meantime two young men who were destined to hold a position in the movement—Mr. C. Watts and Mr. G. W. Foote—had come into some prominence. Mr. Foote at first dissented from Bradlaugh's identification of Secularism with Atheism. "My objections to Mr. Bradlaugh," he wrote to Holyoake in 1873, "will be much the same as your own." In January 1876 he started the *Secularist*. For a few weeks Holyoake co-operated with him in this undertaking, but before the end of January he received one of Mr. Bradlaugh's stiff legal notes—generally the shadows of coming lawsuits—asking for a meeting with "the editors of the *Secularist*," so that he could fix their "joint responsibility" for something Mr. Foote was reported to have said. He pleasantly parried the series of dry notes that followed, and no action was taken. However, he found editorial co-operation with Mr. Foote a source of constant irritation, and in February, after consulting Mr. J. Gimson and Mr. Wright (of Leicester), he severed his connection with the *Secularist*.

The immediate sequel to this seems to have been a reconciliation with Bradlaugh at Leicester. Holyoake gave the chief address at the National Secular Society's Conference at Leeds in June (which he arranged jointly with Bradlaugh), and appeared at other places in association with Bradlaugh and Mrs. Besant. There are cordial letters from both to him toward the close of the year. Mr. Bradlaugh writes: "I desire you to accept at the same time my earnest and sincere thanks for the loyal fashion in which you have this year carried out our Leicester *entente cordiale*." Holyoake had started a *Secular Review* in August, but this was not regarded as antagonistic. The Leicester Secularists, who had built a fine Institute in 1873 and were led by men of the high

character of Josiah Gimson (an old Owenite, head of the engineering firm of that name) and Michael Wright, seem to have been responsible for the healthier state of things in the movement. But it was of short duration. The Christmas compliments exchanged by Holyoake, Bradlaugh, and Mrs. Besant were hardly over when a storm burst that scattered the reunited Secularists in all directions.

Amongst the books which Holyoake had taken over from Watson in 1853, and sold in the Fleet Street House, was a pamphlet by Dr. Knowlton on the restriction of families, entitled *The Fruits of Philosophy*. Holyoake agreed with its principle, but thought it coarse and offensive in parts; as Mr. Bradlaugh and Mrs. Besant always admitted it to be. But it was the least offensive work available on the subject in 1853, and, as Watson thought highly of it, Holyoake stocked it, and sold it when it was asked for, but discouraged the circulation. In 1861 it passed to Austin Holyoake, and from him to Mr. Watts. In 1874 an unpleasant accident brought it into notice once more. A purveyor of indecent literature at Bristol was convicted for selling it. As Mr. Watts was issuing it for the Secular party, the police summoned him, and the grave question arose whether it should be defended or no. Mr. Bradlaugh and Mrs. Besant decided that it should be defended, on the broad principle of the liberty of the press; Mr. and Mrs. Watts, and (independently) Holyoake, decided that the defence of such a work would compromise its defenders. Mr. Watts therefore arranged that he would make a technical plea of "guilty," and, on hearing this, Bradlaugh at once severed all business connections with him. In fact, Mr. Watts was within a short time so pursued with lawsuits that to escape them he accepted an invitation to a Freethought "pastorate" in Canada.



GEORGE JACOB HOLYOAKE  
(1888)

represented—he was the last man to do it—that I was under the same obligation. If Mr. Bradlaugh knew the traditions of the Freethought party, he would write differently. Do not misunderstand me. I, as always, intend no personal opposition to him. I refused to express any opinion on the policy of the party until I knew that Mr. Watts had made his decision. I bore ‘the flag’ into prison in worse days than these; and would carry it on to the treadmill, if necessary, now. But I cannot think of vesting the defence of the liberty of publication upon a quack like Knowlton—imposed upon us by an artifice in days of struggle. Let me add that the use of Mr. Mill’s name is utterly indefensible.

“Yours very sincerely,

“G. J. HOLYOAKE.”

Mrs. Besant thanked him for his “most kindly meant” letter, and said they must be content to differ. He wrote again to say that, as she did not speak of an intention to publish the pamphlet, there was no ground for differing, and “in any case” he would be neutral. She replied :

“DEAR MR. HOLYOAKE,

“Thank you much for your nice little note. . . . I think it probable that we shall follow the line of Mr. Bradlaugh (in *N. R.* Jan. 21)—objection to style of pamphlet as unduly coarse, but maintenance of right of discussion of sexual problems : i. e. revise carefully, publish matter, but refine style. . . .”

Unfortunately, the revision did not go beyond grammar ; and the names of Austin and George Jacob Holyoake were deliberately brought before the court by Mrs. Besant as publishers of the book.

At the end of March Mrs. Besant sent Holyoake a copy of their issue of Knowlton’s pamphlet, admitting that they had made only “grammatical amendments” in it, and saying : “You may like to see it from curiosity,

though you disapprove of our action." Mr. Touzeau Parris requested Holyoake to join the defence-committee, but he peremptorily declined. "In this question that concerns neither Free Thought nor a Free Press I have elected to stand aside," he said.

His feelings can well be imagined when, after this correspondence with Mrs. Besant and Mr. Parris, Mr. Bradlaugh subpoenaed him to give evidence as to his publication of the book, and Mrs. Besant, on the first day of the trial, reminding the court that it had been published by Holyoake & Co., said: "One of the firm is Mr. George Jacob Holyoake, whose name is probably well known to you. The other is Austin Holyoake." They thus made quite impossible the neutrality he had promised, and forced him to explain the real nature of his connection with the book. In a letter to the *Daily News* and the *Times* he explained that he had never selected the book for publication, nor published it in the ordinary sense of the word; and that he always disliked it, and, after the Bristol case had shown the use that was being made of it, he had advised its withdrawal. He ended: "But I desire to say this without reflection on others, who are as much entitled to their opinion as I to mine, and, differing from me, have a right to challenge a verdict upon their contention."

To say—as was said—that this letter secured, or helped to secure, an adverse verdict is ludicrous; the Lord Chief Justice utterly ignored Mr. Bradlaugh's remarks on it. On the other hand, few will question, after reading the correspondence I have given, that both the writing and the form of the letter were wholly justified. Holyoake had wished to "stand aside," and was not allowed to do so. He was even represented as the deliberate publisher of a book that he had unwillingly handled, and often condemned. But his letter

to the papers laid open once more the wide breach between himself and the chiefs of the National Secular Society.<sup>1</sup>

It is advisable to glance only at two other points in connection with the controversy, on which Holyoake's position has not always been accurately stated. It was suggested at the time that Holyoake had made a considerable profit on the sale of the Knowlton pamphlet during the years that he sold it in Fleet Street, and that it was ingenuous on his part to turn against it when his bookselling career was over. The truth is that he made no profit on the stock of books that he took over from Watson, but lost a considerable sum on them. Of several of them he disapproved, but he had undertaken Watson's business, and he felt compelled to retain them, and sell them when they were demanded. I need not add that he sold no book with the *principles* of which he did not agree. But the fact of his selling the book led not merely to fixing on him the responsibility of publishing it, but even to the charge that he reprinted it when he had sold all Watson's stock of this particular work. Mr. Bradlaugh stated in the *National Reformer* that he had seen the work being printed in Holyoake's establishment. This was, in the circumstances, a very damaging charge, and Holyoake's printer, Mr. William Smith, at once wrote a letter entirely denying it, and giving the name of the actual printer after Watson retired from business. Unfortunately, the correcting letter (which I have seen) was refused insertion in the *National Reformer*, and there must be many who still imagine that Holyoake did so questionable an act.

This brief account of the events that rent the Secular

<sup>1</sup> The further course of the trial does not concern us. They were sentenced to fines and imprisonment; but the indictment was quashed on a technical ground by the Court of Appeal. The work was then abandoned, and a fresh one written.



party in the seventies, and had so much influence on its subsequent development, will suffice for our purpose of following Holyoake's action intelligently. The further course of events concerns us little. It will be enough, for those who wish to understand the later position in the Secularist world, to say that a large number of the leading Secularists (J. Gimson, M. Wright, Lerner Sugden, Foote, Trevelyan, Cattell, Mrs. Law, J. P. Adams, F. Neale, and others) seceded with Holyoake from the National Secular Society. In the preceding year Holyoake had started the *Secular Review*, as an organ of the broader Secularism which he was eager to keep alive. "The policy of this review," he wrote on the title-page, "is Secular in the sense of seeking to promote the highest discernible good of mankind, from considerations which pertain to this life as the most intelligent preparation that can be made for another." It appeared weekly from August 1876 to February 1877, and maintained the broad and high ideal that Holyoake advocated, while it bore the excellent impression of his journalistic skill. Indeed, there is a singular remark in the preface to the first volume which seems to suggest that he thought his broadest conception of Secularism was on the way to be realised. In introducing a poem by Mr. Percy Greg of a decidedly theistic character, he observes: "As the great majority of Secularists are Theists, the following tender and manly invocation will be read with pleasure." On those lines, however, no journal could thrive that had the title of "Secular." It was the perennial difficulty of the popular associations of the name.

The paper was now turned into the organ of the new party (February 1877). When Mr. Watts was compelled to break his association with Bradlaugh, Holyoake handed over to him the editorship of his journal. He

had already intimated that his health would not allow him to retain it much longer. After the complete disruption of the National Secular Society, Mr. Foote was associated with Mr. Watts in the editorial control, and Holyoake was one of the chief contributors to the paper. As a new and independent organisation was also needed, they founded a British Secular Union, in which Holyoake, Foote, Watts, Mrs. Law, Cattell, the Leicester Secularists, and many northern followers combined. There we may leave the story of Secular development, except that we may touch one further—and the last and least—collision between Holyoake and Bradlaugh before we return to our normal narrative.

In 1880 Bradlaugh's long struggle for the representation of Northampton came to a successful close, and he was elected together with Mr. Labouchere. As all know, the return of Mr. Bradlaugh led to a remarkable and protracted controversy with regard to his taking the oath of allegiance, which was still exacted of every man who entered Parliament. The defence of Mr. Bradlaugh's conduct has been written with such thoroughness that we need not consider it here. Unfortunately, Holyoake's name was again drawn into the controversy, and a few words must be given in explanation. There was no serious quarrel between the two men, and the episode has already received more attention than it merited. What Holyoake really did was a very simple matter. A Secularist correspondent wrote to ask his opinion upon Mr. Bradlaugh's attitude toward the Parliamentary oath. He replied that, as Mr. Bradlaugh had not hitherto hesitated to take an oath, he would hardly be likely to hesitate now. His opinion was quoted, and, in fact, when Mr. Bradlaugh went on to take—or, rather, offer to take—the oath, Holyoake expressed his disapproval in the terms he had done for forty years.

The real force of the charge against Holyoake rests, once more, on loose and ill-informed exaggerations. Bradlaugh himself wrote to Holyoake that he would make no complaint of "fair criticism of public action" (which was all that had been offered), but he did complain that printed copies of Holyoake's words had been "sent to every M.P.," and that Holyoake had been guilty of "absolute misrepresentation" and "insinuation of unworthy motives." Holyoake replied that he not only knew nothing of any leaflet being sent to Members, but when he asked a number of them for a copy of it they told him they had not seen any such leaflet. On the second point he assured Bradlaugh that the interpretations he complained of were not made by him at all; nor can I find any trace of such things. He had merely made a "fair comment on a public action," and the numbers of Freethinkers who joined in the discussion in the London press, and argued against what they regarded as Holyoake's quixotic aversion to the oath formula, recognised this. To us who look back on the whole story of his career his position is clearer than it could have been to them. As I have before stated, he began his public career with a protest against the insincere repetition of Christian formulæ (by Lloyd Jones), suffered fines and losses for his conviction, publicly rebuked Bradlaugh twenty years before for taking the oath, and always claimed that especial strictness was required of Secularist leaders. He merely repeated in 1880 what he had said for nearly forty years.

A year or two later Mr. Josiah Gimson brought the two men together at Leicester. Holyoake went with him to Bradlaugh's hotel, and once more an *entente cordiale* was established, which lasted until Bradlaugh's death. "In the course of a pleasant, unrestrained conversation,"

says Holyoake, "Mr. Bradlaugh said to me 'that, had he known what he had come to know, he had never said of me what he had.'"<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *Warpath of Opinion*, p. 59. The meeting must have been in 1882 or 1883, as Holyoake wrote his *Plea for Affirmation* in 1882, and Mr. Gimson died in 1883.

## CHAPTER XX

### THE ORGANISATION OF CO-OPERATION

IF any reader, insensible of the intrinsic interest of the matter, feel that I have led him into a somewhat narrower gully of research in the last chapter than the broad plan of this biography suggested, I can only say that this was a crisis in the affairs of a prominent social movement in which Holyoake was engaged, and that I have made no more use of the innumerable documents he has left on it than was necessary to remove some of the gravest misconceptions of his conduct. We return to the wide plain of social endeavour. What Holyoake was doing on the political side during these years I have before described. It remains to see what share he had in the great organisation of the Co-operative Movement that took place in the seventies.

We turned aside from the movement at the interesting period, in the later sixties, when its prodigious growth was beginning to inspire the more thoughtful workers in it with ideas of fresh and larger enterprise. Holyoake's services to it up to that time were very great indeed, though they suffer from falling, so to say, in the pre-historic phase of the movement. It had begun with the Rochdale Store, and Holyoake had chanced to address the openers of that Store, and urge them to act, just before they took their historic step. In many other places his readers and followers were prominent in the founding of stores. He kept a vigilant eye on the map

of England, eagerly noted the rise of new stores, and pressed the principle in every journal that was opened to him. For many years he was the only journalist of influence that recorded and applauded the growth of the movement in its precarious youth; he induced many distinguished social students to examine and encourage it; and his works, especially his *History of the Rochdale Pioneers*, gave a wonderful impetus to the founding of stores, and carried the idea throughout Europe.

By the year 1864 there were twenty or thirty (more or less) Co-operative societies in the metropolis, and some 505 in the entire country. The need of intercommunication was clear to Holyoake, as to many others, and he entered with them on the great work of organisation. At a little coffee-house kept by a Co-operator in Theobald's Road, Edger and he met to frame plans for the connection of the scattered London societies, and a fair measure of success attended their efforts. They made the unconscious preparations for the first Congress of the modern movement. At the same time the more businesslike Co-operators of the north were creating the first slender filaments of interconnection on the ground of material advantage. It was in 1863 that the famous farthing levy was made on the northern societies for the founding of a wholesale department, and the work proceeded vigorously under the care, chiefly, of Holyoake's Rochdale friend, Abraham Greenwood. Co-operative journalism, too, was beginning to appear once more. The northern societies had their *Co-operator* and, later, Mr. Greening's *Industrial Partnerships Record*. The London societies had a section of Holyoake's *Secular Review*, with the separate title of the "Social Economist." In 1867 Holyoake wrote his *History of Co-operation in Halifax*, which gave another great impulse to the opening of stores.

The next step was the linking of north and south, the wedding, in the service of the movement, of the practical qualities of the northerners with the idealism of the south. Holyoake met in Manchester a man who seemed well fitted to accomplish this, Mr. E. O. Greening, and entered upon a cordial and life-long association with him. We saw how, with the assistance of W. Morrison and E. R. Edger, they launched the *Social Economist* in 1868, and for the first time reflected the views and recorded the proceedings of Lancashire and London in one organ. Mr. Greening came to London, and threw himself with Holyoake into the task of building up the unified structure of the modern Co-operative movement. How formidable a task it was, and how constant and serious were the obstacles to unification, will appear in the course of the chapter.

The immediate outcome of their exertions was the holding of the first Congress of the Co-operative Movement. Critics have represented the annual Congresses of the body as pleasant festivals to which the latest converts are sent for the purpose of vociferously applauding fine resolutions which will never be carried out. One must, of course, distinguish between the administrative and the demonstrative machinery of the movement, but the educational effect of the annual Congresses within the body, and their propagandist value for the world at large, must be appraised in very high terms. It is hardly too much to say that the first Congress (of the modern series) was the real inauguration of the final and established phase of the movement. Few northern societies were represented at it, but its unification of Co-operative forces in the metropolis and its striking demonstration of the growth of the movement were of great value. Mr. Thomas Hughes was chairman, Mr. A. J. Mundella vice-chairman, and a number of

distinguished outsiders attended, including the Comte de Paris, Prof. Fawcett, the Hon. E. Lyulph Stanley, Mrs. Jacob Bright, the Earl of Lichfield, Mr. Shaen, and others.<sup>1</sup>

The educational effect of the holding of the Congress was very considerable. It was not the first time that well-known men had attended Co-operative meetings—Mr. Brassey and Earl Rosebery had spoken at the Co-operative Institute earlier—but it was an impressive demonstration of the growth of the movement. Many Londoners had a misty recollection of Co-operative societies as embodiments of eccentric Owenite notions, perilously familiar with Radicals and Secularists. They were astonished to learn that these societies had now become a national movement, and promised to become a world-movement. The 505 societies of 1864 had increased to 1,300 in 1869, with a share capital of two millions sterling, and a trade of eight millions. The Wholesale Society, which began with a farthing levy in 1863, had now 87,854 members, and its net annual profit had arisen from £267 to £34,808. Nor was the demonstration of the power of the movement the only issue of value. London workers had been more or less united in 1863 by Holyoake's "Association for the Promotion of Co-operation," of which E. V. Neale was an honorary member, and in the institutions set up by Mr. Greening. But it was in the Congress of 1869 that the Secular and Christian-Socialist and other elements were first effectively joined. The Congress set up the first Central Board of the movement, and on the London Board, then

<sup>1</sup> The word "Congress" was suggested by the secretary, W. Pare, who had American experience. The idea of an annual conference was, of course, familiar to everybody—especially Holyoake—and has nothing to do with the much earlier Christian Socialist conferences. Holyoake had started London Co-operative conferences in 1864. Some historians have much exaggerated the share of the Christian Socialists in *initiating* the Congresses. It was Greening, Holyoake, Pare, and Edger who did this, with the ready assistance of Neale and Hughes.



appointed, we find a paradisaic mingling of names like Holyoake, Lloyd Jones, Ludlow, Neale, Hodgson Pratt, Greening, Applegarth, Auberon Herbert, T. Hughes, W. Morrison, A. Mundella, etc. The south was united : it remained to join forces with the mighty north.

The London Congress decided that its successor should be held at Manchester, and, as the time approached, northerners warmly discussed the question of amalgamation. They had themselves a North of England Conference Association, that arranged their annual meetings. At this meeting in 1870 they considered the question of fusion. Nothing was decided, but large numbers of northerners attended the Congress, which was held in the Manchester Memorial Hall, with W. Morrison in the chair. The next Congress was fixed for Birmingham, where the process of fusion continued, and the Congress of 1872 was held at Bolton. Here, in the heart of a great Co-operative district, the juncture of forces was greatly advanced. It was known for many years as "the wet Congress," on account of the incessant rain—which Holyoake always expected when he visited Bolton. "Even the Scotch delegates," he says, "who understand a climate where it always rains except when it snows, came into the Hall in Indian file," to shelter behind each other. The breadth of the movement and the need for unity were now very apparent. Not only Scotland and the north and south of England were there, but glowing reports of the spread of the movement in France, Italy, Denmark, and America were received.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> A graceful act of Holyoake's pleased his earlier opponents. Prof. F. D. Maurice died during the Congress. Holyoake suggested to Neale that an expression of indebtedness to him should be asked of the Congress, and, when Neale hesitated, he drew one up, and had it passed unanimously. His correspondence with Neale from this time is always cordial.

In the meantime a step had been taken that greatly aided the unification. The northerners had, as I said, a small weekly journal, but the editor, Mr. Pitman, used it for many enterprises (the *Co-operator and Anti-Vaccinator* was its full title), and a fresh organ was needed. A newspaper society (of Co-operators) was formed for the purpose of buying out Mr. Pitman, and Greening and Holyoake sacrificed their *Social Economist*, so as to leave the field entirely free. In September (1871) appeared the first number of the *Co-operative News*. Holyoake had written its prospectus, and given full-page announcements of it in his *Reasoner* week by week. He wrote many of its early leaders, and he appears in the second issue (and many subsequent ones) as "Our Special Commissioner." He did much for the success of the early numbers, under the editorship of Mr. Farn, his earlier Owenite friend.<sup>1</sup>

Thus by the time of the Congress of 1873 the work of fusion was completed, and the Central Co-operative Board, now known as the Co-operative Union, was set up. Holyoake was peculiarly active in connection with this Congress. It was held in what we may call his northern home, Newcastle : its president was Mr. J. Cowen : and it was given a publicity in the *Newcastle Chronicle* that rarely fell to a Congress in those days. More than 100,000 copies were sold of the issue of the *Chronicle* that described the first day's proceedings ; and the description was largely Holyoake's. Cowen always entertained democratic bodies or persons on a scale of great splendour, and the union of the movement was fitly celebrated. The new Central Board was completely representative. It met in the cabin of the pleasure-steamer that Cowen

<sup>1</sup> It is interesting to notice in the early issues a prominent advertisement of a scheme for the Co-operative purchase of the Alexandra Palace at London.

had provided for a trip on the Tyne. "If Co-operators held a Congress in Paradise," says Holyoake, "they would take no time to look at the fittings, but move somebody into the chair within ten minutes after their arrival." When the nomination was completed, its forty-two members were astounded to receive a salute of forty-two guns.

The amalgamation was achieved, but it must be admitted at once that the union of forces meant no complete unison of ideals. It will be impossible to understand Holyoake's further experiences in the Co-operative movement unless we clearly realise the antithesis of ideals that was now made so explicit by the founding of the Central Co-operative Board. Co-operators are familiar enough with the difference of opinion in regard to the distribution of profits that has divided Co-operative leaders for forty years. Other readers are rarely clear on it; and, as even the more assiduous social student is apt to be misled by some of the literature of the subject, I will endeavour to put it succinctly. Fortunately, I have to do no more here than indicate the divergence of views.

The point may be well introduced by a letter that Mr. Farn, editor of the *Co-operative News*, wrote to Holyoake shortly after the Newcastle Congress and the apparent unification of the Co-operative body:

"DEAR SIR,

"What am I to understand by the reference in your letter to Greening, as per enclosed, that there is someone in London willing to buy up the 'News' for the sake of removing it there? If there are, they must come down stiffly in price, as the profit this week is £10; but mind this is not to be mentioned to any but intending purchasers.

"I don't want to go to London, but it would be better

there, and indeed anywhere, out of the hands of the Manchester Section of the Central Board, who are to all intents and purposes mere joint-stock mongering Co-operators, and would grind everything down to that level if they could, as witness. . . ."

The strength of the phrasing will have no unfamiliar harshness to the Co-operator, but to other readers the situation may seem strange, within so short a time of the amalgamation. For our present purpose it will be enough to say that leading Co-operators were divided in opinion as to the distribution of the net profit made by a society. One school held (and holds) that the profit should be shared between a dividend on capital and a dividend on purchases made—divided, that is to say, between members (share-holders) and customers (of a store). The other school held (and holds) that the employees of a society ought to have a proportionate share in the profit. There is an analogous dispute in regard to the share of control of the affairs of the society, but that can be treated best when we come to the rise of the Co-Partnership movement. The former school regarded the latter, to which Holyoake belonged, as genial "idealists," and thought their idea impracticable: the idealists thought their "practical" colleagues were not wholly faithful to the Co-operative gospel, and privately whispered of "mere joint-stock mongers."

Holyoake took so active a part in the dispute that a few further words on it are requisite, especially as his position has been misrepresented. Mrs. Webb, for instance, in her study of the movement,<sup>1</sup> gives a proper prominence to the divergence, but describes the schools as "Individualists" and "Federalists." Since Holyoake, whom she takes as a spokesman of the

<sup>1</sup> *The Co-operative Movement in Great Britain*, by B. Potter (Mrs. S. Webb).

inconsistencies and futilities of the former school (with Greening and the Christian Socialist group), actually—and very rightly—used the word “federation” for his ideal of organisation, and strongly dissented from the competitive individualism of Mill, the names are very inept. However, Mrs. Webb did not invent the names. The more serious error is that she represents the “Individualists,” and Holyoake in particular, as claiming that profits should be shared with employees in *productive*, but not in *distributive*, societies. That is a very singular exposition of Holyoake’s position (and that of his colleagues). Readers of his *History of Co-operation* will remember how he divides the stores, or distributive societies, into “Dark,” “Twilight,” and “Sunrise” stores (p. 616). The Dark Stores are “those which give no share of the profits to those they employ.” The Sunrise Stores are those which, with other features, “give the same dividend on the wages of all their employees as they give to the consumer who purchases at the counter.” Of the Leeds store, which does not share profits with employees, he says: “Had it done so, Leeds would then be a proud name in Co-operation. It is now merely a great one.” But quotation would be endless. Insistence, in season and out of season, on sharing profits with employees, in the stores as well as the mills, is one of the distinctive features of Holyoake’s Co-operative writings and addresses. On the one occasion when he had a store (147 Fleet Street) he made all his employees partners in the profit, to his own serious danger.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Mrs. Webb merely points out that in his *Self-Help* Holyoake does not blame the Rochdale Society for not sharing profits with its employees. A brief historical sketch, written with the Society’s aid, and to recommend their enterprise, is hardly the work in which to expect criticism. As a fact, however, Greenwood and most of the older Co-operators were in favour of profit-sharing; and there were no paid employees a

For my present purpose of making clear the allusions in some of Holyoake's letters this brief account of the difference between the leaders will suffice. The "idealists" conceived Co-operation rather as a gospel, which must be religiously consistent: the "practical men" took it as an economic system, a scheme by which groups of purchasers funded their small capital in the interest of economy to themselves. Further developments will be considered when we come to the initiation of the Labour Co-Partnership system.

Meantime the movement advanced with giant strides. From 1869 to 1873 it doubled its membership and share-capital once more, and more than doubled its annual profits. Gladstone said somewhere that he "looked to Co-operation as the new influence which should reconcile the mighty powers of capital and labour," the *Times* wrote leaders on it, not without respect, and bishops came to address its Congresses. It would be tiresome to follow Holyoake's co-operative work minutely at this time, and I will be content to run through that part of his correspondence in the seventies which refers to it. We have already seen how his chambers became a bureau of co-operative information in the sixties, and how he spoke for the movement at the annual Social Science Congresses. To all this we have to add in the seventies his work on the Southern Section of the Central Board (and as lecturer for the Board), his journalistic work on the *News*, his editing of the proceedings of the third, fourth, and fifth Congresses, and a good deal of special service that I may briefly illustrate.

In 1870 I find a letter to him from Baron Mackay

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first at Rochdale. It is a mistake to represent the struggle as one of north and south. The great Manchester store shared profits with employees for many years after 1872, and most of the older northerners were with Holyoake.

(afterwards Lord Reay), then ambassador at the Hague, saying: "Whatever England got at the Amsterdam Exhibition in class vii—Co-operative societies, etc.—it owed to you." Twelve awards had been given to English societies, including the Rochdale and Manchester branches and the Wholesale. Holyoake had been sent out to the Exhibition by Somerset Beaumont in the summer of 1869, and he found Baron Mackay much interested in Co-operative matters. He asked Holyoake to assist in writing the report of the Exhibition, and transmitting further information to Holland. England cannot have had many personal representatives at the Exhibition, if one may judge by the violent effort to be polite to him that one finds in the following written note from the Comité d' installation :

"The Commission of the Exhibition has the honour to invite Mr. Holyoake, Son, to joint her on a excursion to Velsen the 10th of August, and to the island of Marken the 12 of August, and to participate at a dinner to be given at Harlem the 10th. A steamer will leave the Neue Stads-Herberg near the harbour, the 10th, at a quarter past eight in the morning, and the 12th at 10 o'clock in the morning."

Mr. Somerset Beaumont was an ardent and generous advocate of working-class movements. He several times gave Holyoake cheques to be spent in ensuring large attendances at Co-operative meetings, and frequently had him to meet foreign social students at dinner.

I have previously spoken of Mrs. Tennyson's interest in Co-operation. One of her earliest letters to him (1873), after he had dined with them, runs :

"DEAR MR. HOLYOAKE,

"I thank you for your kind words. Taken in its highest sense, this is, there can be no doubt, the great

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work of the world, and we and our sons are honoured in proportion as we can help it. . . ."

He sent her a good deal of Co-operative literature, and the idea must have been much discussed in her husband's circle. "I shall ever value highly your book," she wrote in 1879, when he sent her his *History*, "both for itself and for your sake. You have done a great work in the world." When he sent the earlier volume in 1875 she was too ill to write, and Tennyson acknowledged it. "I hope that some day or other I shall have the pleasure of seeing you at this place," he said, referring to his new home in Surrey.

A number of useful steps that were taken at the time are foreshadowed in Holyoake's letters. In 1873 E. V. Neale began his long and valuable career as secretary. It seems from his letter to Holyoake (Sept. 3rd, 1873) that it was Holyoake who suggested the step, through Mr. Greening. Neale undertook the work without payment, so that he "might continue a member of the Central Board without having my position compromised by becoming their paid servant." Even in his first letter he anticipates a vast amount of work and travelling between London and Manchester. Another interesting letter shows the great regard that some of the northerners had for Holyoake's counsels. It is written by the chairman of the Macclesfield Society to one of the leading Manchester Co-operators (who, however, later joined the "practical" school). It runs:

"DEAR MR. NUTTALL,

"What a glorious reply to your question put to the Cent. Board London Mr. G. J. H. has supplied! This week-end must be one of your happiest. I have read it, and re-read it, and read it again. It makes all thinking men see their way, and those that do not think



can decide which is which. . . . What a blending down we must see! I own a mental mist which prevented me from seeing clearly, because the company I found myself in were more clouded than myself; but the light has long been dawning. Holyoake speaks, and we have the clear light of perfect day!!

“W. BARNETT.”

I have spoken of the Alexandra Palace scheme. In 1874, at the Halifax Congress, Holyoake mooted a scheme for commissioning a great artist to paint a picture of—in some way—a Co-operative character. The speech brought him a letter from A. J. Duffield, who advises that the Co-operators will do better to raise £5,000 for Woolner to produce a statue of Shakespeare, of whom “there is not in all the world a worthy statue.”

Much of his correspondence is occupied with the framing or considering of schemes for the furtherance of Co-operation. One of the best known of these schemes is the writing of his *History of Co-operation*. From his acquaintance with the Owenite experiments, his close journalistic attention to the societies founded after 1844, and his success in writing small local histories and as a publicist generally, the function of historian of the movement fell very naturally to him. But a peculiar accident gave the actual impulse to write the work in 1873. In narrating the burial of Robert Owen I referred to an old Owenite named Baume, against whose imaginary designs on the head of Owen Rigby had guarded the grave. In 1873 he became a subscriber to the *Co-operative News*, and the editor, Farn, being in the Isle of Man, called to see him. Both Farn and Holyoake had known him in the Owenite days.

“I found him sitting,” Farn writes, “in a narrow small crib of his own construction. In that crib he has lived night and day since last November: it is alike his

chair and his bed. His bed is composed of a few shavings resting on a thin sheet of iron, which is warmed by paraffin lamps from underneath when necessary. He had no shirt on, but a coarse heavy blanket thrown across his shoulders and tied in front. In front of him is a rude writing-desk, writing materials, a paraffin lamp, and a jar of water. At the side a small cupboard containing bread, milk, and sugar, which are almost the only things he touches in the shape of sustaining food and drink. At the top was a canopy of thin white deal covered with a sheet of brown paper, and the canopy is sufficiently low for him to move it backwards or forwards, and thus shut out what little light and air got into the room, which was in a wretched plight."

This was the man who advertised a gift of £500 to Co-operative societies (under eccentric conditions) in the *News* of July 1873. He had great wealth, and gave Farn an impression of great mental power, darkened by constant suspicion. Amongst the dust and rubbish of his room, the wall-paper and plaster tumbling over them, were numbers of valuable books and documents bearing on early Co-operation. Farn spoke of writing a history of the movement, and Baume offered to lend him his unique collection of material. But in August 1873 Farn wrote that he had given up all idea of writing the history, and promised to borrow the documents for Holyoake. Almost immediately one finds Holyoake announcing in the *Reasoner* that he is going to write the history of Co-operation, and asking for documents bearing on it.

W. Morrison, with whom Holyoake was in constant communication, advised him to have it printed himself and "employ a publisher to sell it." Mr. Morrison had "an opinion that nine-tenths of the advertising is useless, and the abominable system of publishers making you advertise in their own worthless magazines ought to be

stopped." Holyoake was persuaded to bring out the first volume at his own risk. It was issued by the Manchester Co-operative Printing Society in 1875. But Morrison's advice proved unfortunate. When it came to the printing of the second volume (and I gather that there was to be a third), which was ready in 1877, Holyoake received a stiffly-worded resolution from the last meeting of the Society, demanding a settlement of accounts and the giving of securities before the second and third volumes be proceeded with. He consulted E. V. Neale, and was assured that they had too strong a case for him to take action. The publication of the second volume was delayed until 1879.

The work—the most important that Holyoake has written—will generally be acknowledged to be good reading but indifferent history. The later edition, which is now in general use, and is much enlarged, has the disadvantage of the extreme age of the writer. He could to the last pen bright journalistic articles, but the exacting research and the sustained treatment that such a work needed were beyond his strength. Even the earlier edition suffers from falling in a period of very poor health and much anxiety. The second volume was written during the years when he was threatened with blindness. The work contains an enormous amount of historical information, and most of it is presented in detail with great brightness, clearness, and humour; but the arrangement is poor, and the treatment rather fragmentary. The serious student has to *make* history out of the work.

At the time, it was warmly welcomed as the first large account of a movement that was forcing itself on public notice. Judge Hughes wrote that he had read it "with very great interest." W. Morrison thought the final chapter "very eloquent," and failed to find any error in

the book ; but he thought Holyoake "would be criticised for slurring over the subject of Co-operative failures." Mr. Whitelaw Reid wrote him from New York that it was "an invaluable contribution to the story of the most significant labour movement of recent times." Professor Fawcett was grateful for it, and constantly sought information of Holyoake.<sup>1</sup> Lord Derby (Lord Stanley had succeeded to this title in 1869), with whom Holyoake had long been in communication, and who subscribed to the *Co-operative News* from its start, assured him that it was "a valuable addition to the records of social movement in our day." He said further : "No one is entitled to speak on that question with more authority. . . . I have always believed in the principle, and am glad to see it so well explained." Lord Derby presided at the Congress in 1881. On the literary side the book was not without appreciation. Mr. Arthur Arnold wrote : "As one who has been a literary tradesman I may, perhaps, without impertinence, express my opinion that your writing grows in force and in the most forcible employment of your original powers as you grow older." George H. Lewes expressed high appreciation of it on behalf of himself and George Eliot. Professor Tyndall offered a complete set of his works for the library of any Co-operative Society that Holyoake should choose. He discreetly selected Blaydon-on-Tyne.

The great service that Holyoake rendered to the movement by his historical works has always been

<sup>1</sup> Fawcett's opinion of Mr. Briggs's prospectus will probably interest Co-operative students. "If it is successful," he wrote, "it seems to me that the great question of the present day between labour and capital will be solved. I will most gladly write to Mr. Briggs. A scheme so nobly devised and conceived with so much intelligence well deserves encouragement from anyone who takes an interest in the future of the working man."

generously recognised. My purpose in this chapter is rather to suggest the extent of his direct influence in the guidance and spread of the movement during this important period. As a member of the southern section of the Central Board he was always in the graver counsels in regard to its fortunes ; though the slower growth of the movement in the south make the work of its representatives seem small in comparison with the vast work of the northern administrators. I have indicated the dozen different ways in which he employed his gifts and influence on behalf of the movement, and may conclude his work for this decade with a striking letter from Mr. W. H. James (Lord Northbourne) in regard to the evidence he gave before the Select Committee of the House of Commons in 1879.

There had been throughout the seventies a growing alarm amongst private shopkeepers at the rapid growth of the Co-operative Movement. The feeling is so intelligible, and so familiar even in our own time, that it needs little discussion. When the local efforts of grocers against the stores proved of no avail, there was some disposition to press for legislative measures in the interest of the private shopkeepers. W. Morrison foresaw this in 1872, and wrote to Holyoake to suggest that Oldham, for instance, ought to be urged by him to return a Co-operative member—he indicated A. Greenwood—to Parliament. By 1879 the shopkeepers made their complaints audible in the House, and a Select Committee was directed to inquire into the situation. Holyoake pressed, through Mr. James, for a summons to give evidence before the Committee. His evidence seems to have been dreaded by some of the members, but his credentials were too clear to be ignored. The Committee decided to take evidence with regard to London first, then with regard to the provinces, and thought

Holyoake's evidence might "come in at the end." No doubt there was never any serious danger to the Co-operative cause. By that time it had more than half a million members, and was doing an annual trade of more than twenty millions sterling. But Mr. James's letter will be read with no little interest :

"DEAR MR. HOLYOAKE,

"I am so sorry I was unable to stay for the remainder of your evidence to-day, but I had to leave in connection with a committee. . . . I was much pleased with all you told us, and I have not the smallest doubt that the conclusions you have come to are those at which not only the Committee but the public outside must eventually arrive. I think the Chairman was pleased, and I am only sorry that he would not assent to my suggestion, made at the time your name was mentioned first of all, that you should have come before us much earlier, for it would have saved a great deal of useless 'jaw' and twaddle from Debac's tradesmen. I don't think the promoters of the inquiry are anxious for any report. They believe that they can keep their friends in order by staving off the ordeal to the latest possible date; I daresay it will not be till next session. The chances of a dissolution I feel to be too uncertain to allow me to accompany you westwards [to America]. I wish I could most truly. I have not relinquished my passage, but think I am almost sure . . ." [end missing].

It may not be superfluous to add a word about the relations of Holyoake with the Christian Socialists who had now so much share in the work of the movement. Neale, Hughes, and Ludlow brought not only their legal skill to the movement at a critical stage, but they (and Lloyd Jones) strove earnestly for precisely that ideal of Co-operative life that Holyoake advocated. They were indeed so prominent in the southern section that some historians (as, Mrs. Webb) seem to regard

it as a Christian-Socialist work. We have seen that the work of Holyoake, Greening, and Edger cannot be ignored in this way. In particular, Greening's "Agricultural and Horticultural Association" was presenting one of the most impressive examples of profit-sharing with employees. By 1880 it was doing business to the extent of £100,000 a year. And Holyoake's work was only second to that of E. V. Neale, the very generous honorary secretary of the Central Board. But such comparison is futile and distasteful. The interesting point is to see how Holyoake worked with his old opponents.

With Lloyd Jones he never became cordial. Their recollections, going back to the Owenite schism, always held them more or less apart. In 1876, after the Glasgow Congress, Jones rather sharply attacked Holyoake, on a curious ground. Professor Hodgson had presided at the Congress, and Holyoake expressed the thanks of the Congress to him for his address. Jones held that the practice of inviting eminent men from without the movement to take the chair was mere snobbishness, and not in the interest of the movement. He even regarded Dr. Hodgson as hostile to their aims and principles, and opposed the circulation of his address. His references to Holyoake are bitter and satirical, but the general feeling of the body was with Holyoake. The only other case of some open friction with the followers of Maurice was in 1881, and is more instructive. They were so wholly with Holyoake in the controversy about profit-sharing that only a recrudescence of the religious difficulty was likely to cause serious dissidence. Unfortunately, Holyoake felt that they raised this thorny question in the *Manual for Co-operators* which had been written by Hughes and Neale. It was Holyoake's sincere wish to keep his views on

religion quite apart from his Co-operative work, and he was jealous for the purely secular character of the movement. When it prospered, its Congresses naturally began to be the occasion of ecclesiastical functions as well as of civic receptions, and Holyoake must have watched this with some interest. In the previous year (1880) the Bishop of Durham had taken the chair. When therefore the *Manual* seemed to Holyoake to make undue claims for religion and the Church, he spoke with some warmth on the matter at the 1881 Congress. He afterwards apologised to Hughes; and Neale, ever tactful and conciliatory, erased the matter from the proceedings, after some friendly correspondence. In his last ten years Hughes was one of Holyoake's most cordial colleagues.

These are small incidents in a decade of joint social endeavour. Neither side could wholly forget its traditions; and it must be remembered that while Maurice's followers had expressly called themselves *Christian Socialists*, Holyoake had not taken the name, or acted in the spirit, of *Secularist Socialist*. A particular sensitiveness on his side was not unnatural. Apart from these slight differences they worked harmoniously for the movement, and its network of societies ran rapidly over the map.



## CHAPTER XXI

### VISITS TO AMERICA

IN his sixty-second year Holyoake attained that comfortable assurance of success in English public life, a triumphant tour through the United States. His health was still far from being entirely restored, and it was thought that the voyage would help his recovery ; and no country in the world so much appealed to his curiosity as that reputed home of democratic experiment. He had, however, a special reason for making the journey. For some years he had been interested in emigration. Co-operation in industrial life at home needed a complementary ideal of co-operation in the exchange of workers between one country and another. Large numbers of his friends and supporters of earlier days had emigrated to the States or to Australia. They had usually found success, as the difficulties of emigration in those early days formed a kind of natural selection of the enterprising men. The great Pinkerton . detective-firm was founded by an English Chartist, and old Owenites or Chartists turned up frequently during Holyoake's visit. But he saw that a vast amount of energy might be saved by the collection and publication of instructions to ordinary emigrants.

Lord Clarendon, we saw, partly adopted his idea at the Foreign Office in 1869, when he directed consuls to report on the conditions of industry abroad. The most practical thing to do, however, was for a Government

that received many emigrants, like that of the United States or Canada, to issue a handy "emigrant's guide-book," and it was chiefly in the interest of this plan that Holyoake visited America and Canada in 1879 and 1882. As early as 1870 I find him in correspondence with the American Social Science Association with regard to the issue of such a book. The secretary, Henry Villard (son-in-law of Lloyd Garrison), was actually preparing a work of the kind, and Holyoake got estimates of cost from a London printer, but the design was abandoned. In 1879 he decided to go to the States himself, at his own expense, in the interest of the emigrant. The Co-operative Guild (which had been founded, largely through his inspiration, a few years before) also prompted him to make inquiries. Shortly before he went he received a letter from Mr. Mason, of the *Chicago Tribune*, saying: "If Joseph Arch really expects to play Moses, and lead English agricultural labourers over here *en masse*, he will make a gigantic mistake. We are overstocked with labour. . . . It seems as if a protest from some Englishman known as a friend of the working classes might do some good in checking this emigration. If the men come, they are coming to starvation."

Holyoake was aware that the American press had often referred to his exertions, but it is clear that he went with no expectation of finding distinction there. He had done service for the North during the slavery-fight, but those who knew it best were dead, and even they had had to challenge some of his writing on the subject. Wendell Phillips was almost the only man in whom he expected to find friendship. Ingersoll must have known him, but they had had no correspondence. He went out, to use his later title, as "a stranger in America," with a prospect of doing some useful work unnoticed. Even the journey out was less pleasant than

he had anticipated. He expected to sail in the "Scythia" with Mr. W. H. James, Mr. and Mrs. T. B. Potter, and Mr. Childers, but a threatening election altered their plans, and he went alone to Liverpool to sail in the "Bothnia" on August 16th. Liverpool journalists, led by Mr. (Sir E.) Russell, gave him a public dinner as he passed through their city.

He found the Atlantic "a genuine American concern—never still," and had interesting experiences with the clergy on board. He was put in a cabin with a Philadelphia minister, the Rev. J. J. Good, and he had not long been aboard when Dr. Prime, of New York, sought his cabin, and introduced him to other clergymen. They gave him his first impression of American energy and effectiveness, as well as American cordiality, which was soon to be confirmed on all sides. Though there were able American preachers on board, the ship's rule demanded an Anglican service, and a dull, nervous English minister gave them a sermon on England's commercial inferiority, and attributed it to the sins of Englishmen. The congregation of American businessmen smiled. Holyoake's instinct was against the conclusion. When he came back from America he gave a different account of John Bull's inferiority. "Like the oxen of Cuyp," he said, "he stands meditating over the edge of his verdant little island, looking as though he was going to think, but he is so long about it that the spectator never feels sure that he does it."

Of his general impression of America it may be said that even he failed for once in originality, though his detailed observations are extremely original, acute, and entertaining. As a good Free-trader he finds proofs of the evil of Protection everywhere, and he frowns on the political system; and the two qualities of the American character he finds himself always commenting on are

its impetuosity and its big way of doing things. This he expected in theory, yet he says that one's sensation on entering New York must be like that of a Tangier oyster when it is put in water to expand. With playful exaggeration he used to tell afterwards that he sometimes went to see business-men lunch in New York, but, though he saw plenty of them enter and pay their bills, he never caught the actual dispatch of the food. There was little need of theological considerations to explain America's progress. In time he realised one cause of American quickness. He was in Boston, and received an attractive invitation to attend and speak at a Liberal Convention at Chautauqua Lake, where he was to meet "all the most able and best known Liberals in the United States." When he asked the booking-clerk at the station for a ticket, he learned that it was 700 miles away. He made the double journey in time to lecture at Boston on the Sunday.

The one quite unexpected sensation he experienced in America was a pleasant one. He was welcomed everywhere with a warmth and distinction that surprised him. One or two friends had been informed that he was coming, but, as he changed his ship at the last moment, there was not a soul to meet him when he landed at New York. His clerical companion was suddenly called away to a sick relative, and he had to make his way alone to the city. He put up quietly at No. 1 Broadway Hotel (now the Washington), but it did not remove his feeling of isolation to wander about its endless corridors, or dine amidst groups of sea-captains talking every language in the world but that of London. By and by he made his way to the one friend he thought he had in New York, his old comrade Hollick, who now had a surgery in Broadway and cordially welcomed him. At Hollick's he found a letter

(written before he left England) asking him to call at the offices of the *Worker*, and his fortunes rapidly changed. Mr. Barnum, the manager, had the news of his arrival telegraphed to 123 journals, and a gentle shower of invitations began to fall. He was accorded receptions at the Press Club, the Brooklyn Philosophical Society, and the Manhattan Liberal Club; and the Union, Century, and Lotos Clubs put their rooms at his disposal. He "spent enchanted days amidst the pictures, books, and stately chambers." Pressmen and social students met him with great distinction, especially Mr. Barnum, Mr. Whitelaw Reid, and Dr. Felix Adler. But he left New York before it had time to exhibit much of its known hospitality, and his friends had to await his return.

From New York he sailed up the Hudson to Saratoga with Mr. Barnum, to see the holding of the Republican Convention and nomination of a candidate for the presidency. His account of the function, like most of his other sketches, is written in a mood of playful and superficial observation. Ingersoll actually compares it to some of Dickens's best work. He was only ten weeks in the States and Canada, and did not pretend to see more than the surface of American life. There were, however, peculiarities of the American political machine that distressed him, when he reflected that he was in a Republic that had passed the experimental stage. When he asked a friend what was the real difference between Republicans and Democrats, he was told: "The Republicans profess to be honest: the Democrats don't." He was, of course, well acquainted with the real difference, but the pleasantry had a point. The struggle for office and emolument detracted from the dignity of the republican ideal. There were, he calculated, 100,000 place-men belonging to the party that was in power, and each

place-man had nine supporters. Then there were 100,000 would-be place-men of the opposite party, with 900,000 supporters struggling to get them into office. In a way he exaggerated their faults as much as Dickens did, but his remarks were void of malice, and he so constantly kept the balance by reference to English defects that the whole American press spoke pleasantly of him. Their big way of doing things extorted his admiration everywhere. The *Tribune* offices at New York caused him to think of Fleet Street with humility. The boat in which he sailed up the Hudson seemed to him capable of carrying a town. The Saratoga hotel (United States) had already 2,000 guests when he arrived, yet the staff received with placidity the arrival of a further thousand, and he found himself lodged in a room of princely spaciousness. England, he felt, was midway between Holland and the States; his sensations might be compared to those of Gulliver in Lilliput and Brodingnadia respectively.

At the Liberal Convention at Chautauqua Lake he saw a different side of American life. This was a congress of its idealists or "advanced thinkers," and he felt that there were corresponding defects. They pushed the principle of independence too far. Nearly every member, it seemed to him, had "an armful or reticuleful of first principles." He arrived early at the Lake with a few friends who prepared him to witness a scene of some confusion. After listening to their accounts of former Conventions, he drew up a series of resolutions, and had them signed by his small group of friends and inserted in the chief local paper. When the reformers began to assemble the next day they read the following manifesto:

We, the undersigned, having arrived at Chautauqua Lake a day before everybody else, do resolve ourselves

into a Primary Convention, setting forth the following objects :

1. That the President of the Convention be required to define its objects, and state them as briefly as possible.
2. That as many of the speakers be requested to speak as possible to those points.
3. That each speaker be allowed reasonable time for denouncing everybody and everything, and afterwards it is hoped that everybody will proceed to business.
4. That, if more imputation be desired by any speakers, the proprietor of the hotel shall be requested to set apart a Howling Room, to which all such persons shall retire, attended by as many reporters as can be induced to accompany them.
5. That it is not intended here to disparage imputations or irrelevancies, which are always entertaining if well done, but to prevent the time of the Convention being consumed upon persons instead of principles.
6. That clear notice be given to speakers that this is not a Convention for the discussion of every subject under the sun, but of those only proposed from the chair.

Holyoake and four others signed the paper, but some of his friends thought it too frivolous for the solemn summer atmosphere of Chautauqua Lake. Holyoake admired American speakers, but thought American audiences too long-suffering.

A few days after he left New York he was in Boston. The one man whom he looked forward to seeing in America was Wendell Phillips, and he was not disappointed. During the abolitionist-struggle Phillips had paid him the compliment of replying at length to one of his articles, and had explained that it was the only article on the subject by a foreigner that he had

thought worthy of examination. They had corresponded afterwards, and exchanged productions. In 1874 Phillips wrote, acknowledging some pamphlets:

"That on Mill was due certainly to a just estimate of him, but how sad that human jackals should make it necessary! Those on Co-operation I read and read again, welcoming the light you throw on it—for it is one of my most hopeful stepping-stones to a higher future. Thank you for the lesson—it cleared one or two dark places—not the first I owe you by any means, for I've read everything of yours I could lay my hands on. There was one small volume on rhetoric, methods of address, hints towards effective speech, etc., which I studied faithfully, until someone to whom I had praised and lent it, acting probably on something like Coleridge's rule that books belong to those who most need them, never returned me my well-thumbed essay. . . .

"I wish I could have an hour's talk with you on this Labour and Capital question—our imminent question—one perhaps to have as angry an agitation as slavery caused. Wealth with you governs, but its power is, I suppose, somewhat masked—sometimes countervailed or checked by other forces. With us it rules bare, naked, shameless, undisguised—one *incorporated* wealth, often wielded by a single hand, is fearful in its direct, and still more in its indirect, power. . . . Vanderbilt is reported to say: 'It is cheaper and surer to buy legislatures than voters.' This is the peril of universal suffrage. The sadness of the whole thing is one hardly sees whence the cure is to come. I *believe*, I don't *see*.

"Truly our movements demand a most patient faith. I never expected to see any success of our anti-slavery struggle. Fortified in Church, State, and Capital, the system would have outlived this generation and perhaps the next, with ordinary shrewdness on the part of its friends—the gods made them mad in their way to destruction and so hastened it.



"Neither shall I live to see any marked result of our Labour Movement here, though it is true that our masses ripen marvellously quick. But, as you've said, the cliques, jealousies, distrust, and ignorance of working men are our chief obstacles. Indeed, we sometimes get better help from open-hearted capitalists. Your ranks are infinitely better trained than ours to stand together. I beg and pray our men, with little success, to stand together on some *one* demand just long enough to be counted, and so ensure that respect which numbers always command in politics, where universal suffrage obtains. Then we have all the brains of the land our servants, and soon gain that attention which is here half of success."

The letter may be regarded as a safe indication of the temper in which American public men welcomed Holyoake. They regarded him as a man who had spent a long life in earnest endeavour to help the mass of the people: many, like Phillips, would say *successful* endeavour and wise guidance. It was on Co-operation, or some aspect of the social question, that he always lectured, and more than one clergyman invited him to his pulpit.

Phillips had written that, though his wife was ill, he hoped to show Holyoake "little Boston." One day he took him to Bunker's Hill, and from there to Longfellow's home. He had the aspect of a "Jupiter of poetry," Holyoake says. Lowell also had a house in the neighbourhood, but he was away in England at the time. They happened to meet John Bright's son in one of the streets, and Holyoake introduced him to Phillips. He was much impressed to see the great orator stand with his hat in his hand to say a few words to the son of Bright. The Sunday in Boston he spent with Colonel T. W. Higginson. Mrs. Theodore Parker showed him the rooms of her dead husband, with whom he had

corresponded in the days of the slavery agitation, and he lectured in the Parker Memorial Hall. With some emotion he found himself speaking one day on the platform from which Lloyd Garrison had been dragged. The Hon. Josiah Quincy had taken him to attend a meeting in Stacy Hall, and he was begged to address it. For all his activity Phillips professed to find him shy of meeting celebrities, and told him to "put on American brass (for once) and invade Geo. W. Curtis's den," when he expressed a wish to see him. To Curtis he sent a note introducing Holyoake as one of the ablest social reformers in England. The one thing in which he declined to meet Holyoake's wishes was when Holyoake wanted to hear him speak. He had an engagement in a Catholic Hall fixed for some time after Holyoake's departure, and Holyoake lightly offered to submit to baptism if they would make the engagement earlier.

"No," Phillips wrote to him, "you'll not compass any success in your plots to hear me. Go away fancying I'm something. Sydney Smith got to such courageous noon of daylight that the only Mission remaining was the Archb. of Cant. you remember. Submit to your fate, and, after waking from all your other American dreams, leave me still a myth and fond illusion. A pleasant voyage to you. May you find old England so stupid that you'll hurry right back to *life*."

"Yours with all my heart,

"WENDELL PHILLIPS."

At Boston he had a first experience of American interviewing. He had little objection to the ceremony in principle. "The press of America," he said, "may be compared to a vast machine for the production of intellectual electricity," and one of its chief functions was the interview. Unfortunately, when he told the reporter that Beaconsfield had described the queen as

"not either mentally or morally fitted to govern,"<sup>1</sup> the note became converted into a statement that the queen told Beaconsfield that *Gladstone* was "not either mentally or morally fitted to govern." Some shrewd sub-editor had acted on what he thought was the general probability of the matter. Holyoake did not face his interviewers less amiably, but he says that, when he wanted anything reported very accurately, he used to say the contrary of what he meant. He brought away a high regard for Boston : only differing from the usual estimate in thinking that Boston owed its dignity and position, not merely to its intellectual pre-eminence, but to its superiority in the kind of thought that leads to action. Emerson, whom he visited at Concord, gave him the same impression. He was the Carlyle of America ; but "while Carlyle inspires you to do something, not clearly defined, when you have read Emerson you know what you have to do." However, Emerson would not allow him to say a word in disparagement of Carlyle.

A few hastily-arranged lectures were given by him in various Massachusetts towns. He visited Harvard with Colonel Higginson and Cornell. The acting-president of Cornell, the Rev. Dr. Russell, was the father of his friend Mrs. Sharman, and drove him from the station. He addressed 450 of the students at Dr. Russell's request, and was glad to see that they included 50 ladies. Dr. Russell invited him to Cornell as "the apostle of the most important doctrine that this century will publish to humanity." One town he lectured at bore the name of Holyoke City, and someone suggested that it took its name from an ancestor of his. He rejoined that he was quite prepared to collect the arrears of rent that must be due to him. Chicago seemed forbidding

<sup>1</sup> In an after-dinner speech at Aylesbury in 1871.

when he approached it on the rail—he “never saw such a lumbering, dingy, ramshackle, crowded, tumultuous, boisterous outside of a city before”—but when he entered it he changed his estimate. Good Americans, he said, might go to Paris to die—if they had not chanced to visit Chicago first. Chicago was the home of an old Owenite friend from England, Mr. Charlton, general agent of the Chicago and Alton Rail Road. From that moment his long railway journeys were made pleasanter, though they had been far from unpleasant. The effectiveness and organisation of the railways amazed him. He says, contrasting the English baggage-system: “In America a civil, quiet person appears who asks you where you will have your baggage sent to, and he gives you a metal ticket with the name of the place, and you leave the station and proceed unencumbered on your journey. Days, or even weeks after, probably 3,000 miles from the place where you last lost sight of your portmanteaus and their precious contents, the train stops at a prairie station, when there issues from an official ranche in a wood, or some unnoticed depot in the rocks, a baggage-master, who has upon his arm the corresponding check to that which you have in your purse, and your luggage is there exactly as when you last saw it.” The last phrase, at least, might be contested. Mr. Charlton was interested in his emigrant-plans, and obtained free passes for him and other convenience. While he was at Philadelphia the railway company put a special train at his disposal to take him to Reading, where he wanted to hear Ingersoll lecture, and bring him back on the following day.

Early in October he passed over into Canada with Mr. Charlton, visiting Niagara on the way. He affected to see “the shadow of the crown” upon it, after the States; but the richness of the country and the energy of

its people much impressed him. "Canaan was nothing to Canada," he observed. The Premier, Sir John Macdonald, was very cordial, and introduced him to the Minister of Agriculture, the Hon. J. H. Pope, for the purpose of his mission, as "a distinguished member of the public press in England." He easily interested the Canadians in his object, and we shall see that they eventually published an emigrant's guide. At Hamilton Holyoake met the Rev. H. Ward Beecher. He felt slighted by Mr. Beecher afterwards in New York, but a letter he received from him reassured him that it was due only to pressure of work. "You will leave a good impression behind you," Mr. Beecher wrote. "I admire your prudence and your good spirit, and am deeply interested in the cause that you have so much at heart. The egg once hatched can never get back to egg again. The working men of the world can never get back to what are called 'the good old days.'"

A few days later he was in Washington. New York (seen from Broadway) had seemed "a Paris taken to business." Washington he thought "the lotus-land of business." Its restfulness relieved him after the rapids of New York, and he thought it "superb in its brilliant flashes of space." Whether he would not have preferred a touch of New York energy in its officials, when he came to discuss the business of his mission, he does not relate in his book. Washington was the city of chief importance in view of the object of his trip, and his experience there was less encouraging than at Ottawa. Everybody was much more than polite, but the emigrant's guide-book was not published. He had a talk with President Hayes at the White House, with General Mussey and General Sharman, and with the Secretary of State, Mr. Evarts. His idea was regarded as useful, but not adopted; though the Secretary of State sent him

*~ as the British  
call him!*

300 maps and a good deal of other material that would be of use in compiling a guide. They doubted if the Federal Government had the power to compile a work that concerned each State. At the request of the District Council he gave a public lecture on Co-operation during his stay at Washington.

His pleasant impressions of Washington, in spite of his virtual failure, were due largely to the fact that he was entertained there by Colonel Ingersoll, and formed a very cordial friendship with him. Early in October Ingersoll had written that he was disappointed in not seeing him at Chautauqua. "My principal reason for attending the Convention," he said, "was to see you. You must visit Washington, and while here must make my house your home. It will give me great pleasure to assist in making you real happy." It need hardly be said that he succeeded. His own impression of Holyoake may be gathered from the farewell letter he wrote to him. He had driven to Reading to see him pass through in November, but had missed him, and wrote to explain.

"I can hardly tell you," he continued, "how glad I am to have made your acquaintance. I now have another reason for visiting England. Mrs. Ingersoll and all the rest send their very best regards, and all wish that you could have stayed for years. Well, good-bye. You have lived a brave and useful life. You have broken many chains. You have lightened the burdens of the poor, and in a thousand ways added to the blessings of mankind. Let me hear from you now and then. Hoping that the sea will cast you on your native shore, and that all you love may welcome you home again,

"I am, as ever, your fond admirer,

"R. G. INGERSOLL."

Like most of the others, Ingersoll seems to have thought that the frail old man of sixty-two was near taking his

farewell of earth. It is well that they penned their estimates of him while he yet lived. It was he that wrote or read most of *their* obituary notices.

Several of Holyoake's lectures in the brief tour were given in churches, as I said. At Providence he spoke in Mr. Haynes's church; at Chicago in that of his earlier friend, Brooke Herford. At Cincinnati he gave one of his most successful addresses. It was given in Pike's Opera House, under the auspices of the Unity Club. A Unitarian minister, Mr. C. W. Windte, took the chair, and afterwards sent him a draft for seventy-five dollars (£15) as "a slight return for your excellent lecture." "We may," Mr. Windte added on his own account, "differ in the speculative part of our religion, but we are one in its practical requirements, and conduct, as Matthew Arnold says, is two-thirds of life." The other principal address that he delivered was also presided over by a clerical chairman, Dr. Robert Collyer. It was arranged by the Cooper Union, and was given in their great hall at New York on November 1st. The vast audience, which included many men of distinction, made Holyoake feel as if he were "speaking in a town." Professor Adler and other social students addressed the audience after his lecture. "You have given, and will give great strength to us in future," Mr. Barnum wrote him.

Americans were by this time paying much attention to Holyoake's movements, and interviewers assailed him from all sides. One reporter, vaguely acquainted with his interest in the Garibaldi Legion, described his interview as occurring with "General Holyoake." His last and most touching distinction was paid by New York on November 18th, the day before he sailed for Liverpool. Mr. Barnum, Dr. Adler, and a few others, arranged a public breakfast in his honour at the St. James Hotel

in Broadway, and he was greeted by a very honouring company. The President of the Republic regretted that he could not "join in the entertainment to Mr. Holyoake, and thereby show my appreciation of the work in which he is engaged." G. W. Curtis, who also was away from New York, had to decline, but wrote: "I regret it the more as no man deserves more honour than Mr. Holyoake from all who are interested in the humane work to which he has devoted himself." The Hon. John Hitz sent his "cordial sympathy with the life-long and earnest efforts of your esteemed guest, whose hand has been so ceaselessly extended to the great mass of toilers." Some eighty guests came to honour him, several clergymen being amongst the number. Peter Cooper, Whitelaw Reid, E. L. Godkin (editor of the *Nation*), R. Heber Newton, Dr. Adler, E. V. Smalley, Mrs. E. Thompson, and other well-known New Yorkers, gave a warm and long-remembered termination to his first brief visit to the States.

His observation of American life was so consciously and necessarily superficial that he had no idea of "writing a book about it," even in those days of restricted output. He felt, however, that his superficial impressions would not be unjust, and he wrote a series of articles on his tour in the *Co-operative News*. They were collected in a little volume, *Among the Americans*, which is not the least entertaining of Holyoake's works. Mr. Knowles also asked him for an article for the *Nineteenth Century*, which he called "A Stranger in America." Mr. Whitelaw Reid took some of his sketches for the *Tribune*, but election-news flooded his columns, and he used few of them. His cheque was so very American that Holyoake sent him an ornate receipt in this form :

"Received from Whitelaw Reid, Esq., for the opportunity (which proved to be of very little good to him) of



publishing 'advance proofs' of certain chapters entitled 'Among the Americans,' thirteen pounds sterling, which the author accepts with grateful misgivings, as to whether he is entitled to it."

A Chicago firm issued all his articles in book-form, and the American press was kind to it. "An excellent sample of a traveller at his best," the *Nation* pronounced him; and the *Spectator* said that "to read his book is like enjoying the sea-breeze on a sultry day." Papers with some friendly bias, like the *Sun*, reviewed it at length. His character—genial, just, and generous—was visible in the little book.

The correspondence entailed in the publication of his impressions and the invitations to return that he constantly received kept America fresh in Holyoake's mind. He found himself, in fact, invested with an embarrassing authority on America before very long. One day he received a letter from the manager of the "Camden Turkish Baths" asking him to secure a place for him in the States. It seemed that Mr. J. G. Crawford, while bathing there, told the man that "a movement of Holyoake's finger" was all he needed to get a good place. Mr. Cyril Herbert (son of the artist) wrote him—"knowing the weight of your influence"—to ask if there were hope of selling to some "artistic counterpart of the Peers' Robing Room" in the States a large picture by his father. Henry George asked his mediation for placing his *Irish Land Question* on the English market. "*Progress and Poverty*," it is interesting to read in the letter, "has done extremely well here, for a book of its kind. . . . A wealthy gentleman of this city [New York] has recently purchased a thousand copies, which he is sending out to academical libraries." Mr. George went to see Holyoake on his second visit to America. "Why, you look quite human," Holyoake said to him.

More interesting was a correspondence with Froude that grew out of his American visit. Readers of *Sixty Years* will remember that, when in Canada in 1882, he visited Carlyle's sister (Janet), Mrs. Hanning, at Hamilton. It seems that during his earlier visit he got some document from Mrs. Hanning, through Mr. Charlton, and sent it to Froude, who was then in the heat of the controversy over the Carlyle letters. Froude answered :

"DEAR MR. HOLYOAKE,

"I am sincerely grateful to you for sending me Mr. Charlton's letter and its enclosure. There is nothing in the letter with which I was not acquainted. It shows only that Mrs. Hanning's memory is a good one. My own difficulties have arisen rather from the excess of material than the absence of it. I am glad to have succeeded in interesting you in *Mrs. Carlyle*. *She* is my special legacy from Carlyle. His chief desire was that her portrait should be accurately drawn. Both characters were essentially magnificent. But she had a bitter tongue, and he was irritable, and in fact men and women of genius find or make an uneasy time of it in this world.

"I am glad to have been brought thus accidentally into correspondence with you. You have fought a brave battle for many years ; and if others now find the road more easy to travel, you were one of the pioneers when it lay through thorns and brambles. I never saw you or heard your voice, but I have not watched your action with the less interest.

"Yours faithfully,

"J. A. FROUDE."

In thanking him Holyoake observed :

"A single sentence in your letter enables me to better understand Mr. and Mrs. Carlyle than what else I have read from their friends. I was among those who thought you should have omitted parts of the *Reminiscences*, but

the portions of his life you have published satisfied me that you were right. I regarded him as the greatest ruffian in literature since Dr. Johnson, but since he wished to be described as he was, I recognised in that the daring and sense of self-justice which redeemed Johnson and restore respect for Carlyle. The passages in the *Reminiscences* relating to his wife I knew to be a wail of remorse rather than of love. All great thinkers, being mostly unconscious of the claims of others, act as though their absorption was selfishness, which it is not, though it so appears to others."

When Holyoake returned from Canada in 1882, he wrote to tell Froude that he had visited Mrs. Hanning. She told him :

" A paper was sent to me by the family to sign against Mr. Froude. I said I did not wish to sign it. Mr. Froude was my brother's friend. He always spoke of Mr. Froude with great regard. My brother trusted him, and I think the family ought. I said I wanted nothing artificial said about him. My brother was always for the truth, and so am I."

Froude wrote in reply to his report of this :

" You are most kind in writing to me. I do not wonder that some members of Carlyle's family and that the world generally are perplexed and angry. It is so unusual in these days that a man who is conscious that he has fallen short in an important part of his duty should wish to make a public reparation that such an interpretation is the last which would occur to him. Yet this is what Carlyle felt, and he trusted to me as a friend on whom he could rely to execute his desire. I considered his retention of these letters and preparation of them for publication to be the finest act of his very noble life. I could not dissuade him from it—for it was really needed—and hereafter men will understand and honour him for his courage and truthfulness. I can do nothing at present but let the storm rage on."

To return, however, to the interval between the two visits to America, one finds him constantly assailed with invitations to return. Ingersoll was especially pressing. Thanking Holyoake for his *History of Co-operation*—"the worthy crown of a long and useful life"—he said: "You have shown such admirable temper, such keenness of mind, and such kindness of heart, that I am charmed with you, and count it one of the happiest events of my life to have made your acquaintance. We talk of you every day." A few months later he wrote: "It seems a thousand years since we met. . . . Do you expect to visit America again? You would meet with a splendid reception now—we know you." In another letter: "You are doing great good, and the great regret I have when thinking of you is that there are no others like you. I read your last article on Bradlaugh. You expressed my feelings to a hair."<sup>1</sup> At last, in June 1882, Ingersoll heard that he was coming, with his daughter, and invited them to spend a week with him at Long Beach. "I anticipate one of the best visits of my life from you and yours," he said.

Holyoake had not ceased to hope for the publication of the emigrant's guide. During the year after his first visit to the States he heard that 180,000 poor emigrants sailed there from Liverpool, and he pictured their struggles with some concern. He continued to assail his friends, and at length Sir C. Forster and Professor Thorold Rogers put the matter before Gladstone, who was again

<sup>1</sup> Ingersoll's opinion of Pres. Hayes may interest. "Well," he wrote in March 1881, "at last Mr. Hayes has gone back to the oblivion from whence by accident he emerged. He left Washington utterly hated by all who knew him." When Garfield was shot, Ingersoll found consolation in the fact that the assassin had delivered lectures against himself. Holyoake won much American regard by his action in evoking English sympathy.

The reference to Bradlaugh is to Holyoake's opinion of Bradlaugh's willingness to take the oath,

Prime Minister. Gladstone had, as we shall see, had recent reason to think highly of Holyoake's sincerity, and he granted him a hundred pounds from the Public Service Fund that he might return to the States and Canada in furtherance of his aim. He sailed on the "Scythia" in June, with his daughter Emilie (Mrs. Holyoake-Marsh).

The visit is so largely a repetition of the earlier one that I need not enlarge on it. The same festive journalistic dinner (now at Manchester) graced his departure from the north. "Mr. Holyoake's life," the public invitation ran, "has been one of unselfish duty, which has won him the respect of persons of all shades of opinion; and it is believed that there are many in this district who will rejoice at the opportunity of showing their esteem for one who adds to literary brilliance and power of humorous delineation the grace of candour and fair dealing, and whose life has shown, in an unusual degree, a sense of devotion to the public good." The same clerical group made entrance for him on the boat; and on this occasion he induced the captain to allow an American, Dr. Lorimer, to deliver the Sunday sermon.

But his arrival at New York had brighter features than in 1879. A deputation (General Crooks, Dr. Winterburn, and Dr. Broughton) came out to the boat to welcome him, and conducted him and Miss Holyoake to the Manhattan Hotel, where they were entertained for a few days by Mrs. Elizabeth Thompson (proprietor of the *Worker*). Mrs. Thompson, a generous supporter of social work, brought Senator Blair to assist him in his mission and give his inquiries a judicious direction. She also gave him a further hundred pounds. From Manhattan he went to spend ten days with Ingersoll and his family (and Mr. and Mrs. C. P. Farrell) at Long Beach. His health was much better than in 1879, and the brilliant weather and cheering hospitality were very

helpful to him. Mr. Charlton, too, had written that he insisted on smoothing the long rail-journeys for him more than he had done in 1879. Charlton severely forbade him to mention his service or make a return of any kind, but he yielded at the offer of a fine and exceptionally large portrait of Bright. It proved a fresh stimulus to Holyoake's complaints of the American tariff-system. The officials demanded a duty of thirty dollars on it, and only relented, when he represented it as a gift to a friend, to the extent of reducing the payment to six dollars. Alderman Hallett (of Brighton) had asked him to take a hundred copies of a work on sanitation for free distribution in America. On these they demanded a duty of a hundred dollars, and only a most persistent and prolonged and learned correspondence at Washington procured free admission for the gifts.

With the social aspect of his trip, which lasted four months, I may deal briefly. He lectured little, but travelled as far as Quebec in the north and Kansas and Santa Fé in the west—some 8,000 miles. For the trip to New Mexico the Atchison Topeka and Santa Fé Railroad Company put a special train at his disposal, and gave him a week's journey through the country they traversed, which they recommended for emigration. A cutting from a Las Vegas paper records the arrival of "the Honorable George J. Holyoake" and party. He seems to have left some consolation in Las Vegas. People were in great alarm about the menaces of a comet that was visible at the time, and a leader in the *Daily Optic* calmed their fears with learned assurances from Holyoake that there would be no cosmic disaster. Smaller disasters overtook him in his long and varied journey. At Kansas (in 1879) a large building collapsed at the hour when he was engaged to visit it. The accident led someone to tell him that the mayor of Kansas once said

he "wished the people would let someone die a natural death, so that a stranger might know how healthy the city was." When they left the train at Santa Fé, and went further south in three carriages, one pair of horses bolted, and another pair broke the spring of their carriage. There were no roads, and obstacles had to be negotiated with spirit. Later, when they were travelling in Canada, the train parted in the middle, and Holyoake and his friends were left in the abandoned part; but the next oncoming train was stopped in time to prevent a collision. A few days later they were "distributed over the Dominion at a minute's notice" by the bolting of their horses.

Early in September they visited Niagara, and were escorted by a party of Canadians from there to Hamilton. He lectured there and at Toronto, where he was entertained by Goldwin Smith. At Ottawa he was very cordially received by the members of the Government. Sir John Macdonald asked a number of them to meet him at dinner, and all showed real interest in his work. When he had first passed over from his republican friends, he had spoken of seeing the shadow of the crown on Canada. Now he wrote to Sir John Macdonald: "The ideal Republic of Washington has wheels of administration which drag more heavily than those of the monarchy of Ottawa." In point of fact, the Canadian Minister of Agriculture had an excellent manual for emigrants in the press three months after Holyoake's visit, and submitted the sheets to him in January. It was published in the course of 1883. Holyoake had a letter of introduction to the Marquis of Lorne (from Lord Kimberley), but had no opportunity of seeing him.

At Washington he met with little less cordiality, but much less success. Sir Charles Dilke gave him a letter

of introduction to the British Minister, the Hon. L. Sackville West, who put the matter to the Secretary of State for him. He heard that the assistant-secretary (Mr. John Davis) was meditating a work of the kind, and that the President (Arthur) had a favourable opinion of his design. But he failed to induce the Federal Government to act in the matter. There seems to have been a less spontaneous interest in it than at Ottawa, though there can be little doubt it was a good suggestion. Thousands of poor emigrants were pouring yearly into the over-stocked eastern towns, while millions of acres of good land lay idle in the further States. Holyoake took extreme trouble to furnish the officials with estimates of cost of producing, plans of distribution, etc., but he could only report "favourable consideration" at Washington. However, Ingersoll was again his host at Washington, and the time passed pleasantly.

After leaving Ingersoll at Long Beach he had had little time for social amenities before his return at the end of November. He again visited Wendell Phillips, who wrote when he was leaving: "I watch your course and utterances with more interest than those of any other Englishman, and when I learn your judgment on any matter feel I have safe ground to go on." General Mussey wrote with equal warmth. A presentation was made to him by a group of Boston ladies "with the highest appreciation of his distinguished services in the cause of humanity and freethought." At New York, just before he sailed, he was greeted with a reception in the rooms of the Co-operative Dress Association. The "Committee of Arrangements" seems itself to have included half the active workers of New York (Mrs. Thompson, Dr. Adler, Dr. Collyer, Dr. O. B. Frothingham, Heber Newton, Ingersoll, and some twenty other speakers and social students, including six clergymen). It will be



enough to quote the letter sent him by this Committee on his departure :

“DEAR SIR,

“Before you leave America for your home in England we desire to thank you for your admirable discourse on ‘Co-operation as a moral force,’ your wise counsel in organising an ‘Advisory Co-operative Board,’ and the opportunity you have afforded many friends to greet you personally.

“Your unselfish devotion to human interests, your wise moral and economic counsels, and the beneficial practical results you have achieved, endear you greatly to us ; and while we may not offer you all that our hearts prompt, we will at least wish you a pleasant and speedy voyage and many years of health and strength to advance the noble work you have begun, and to continue a friendly link between the old world and the new.

“It would afford us heartfelt pleasure to greet you here again, and we trust the remembrances of America may find such a place in your heart as to draw you hither again should occasion offer.”

He could not but see that the whole feeling which made his visits to America so pleasant was a tribute to character and to solid service done. He had not the power or the eloquence to draw people to him in an artistic appreciation that need not look below the surface. American people were won by the charm and worth of his personality. A snow-storm whitened the great city when he left it in the “Catalonia,” and the ocean was in a threatening mood ; but he brought away with him an impression of America that helped much to warm the twenty years of old age that lay before him.

For some months he worked hard at the preparation of his report to Mr. Gladstone. He sent it in through Professor Thorold Rogers, and was pleased to be told by Sir Charles Forster that Gladstone “thought very highly”

of his work. By that time he had the proofs of the manual that the Canadian Government was preparing, and he helped to distribute it in England. The Canadians gave him a "right of proprietorship" in the book, but he found it inadvisable to sell it. Gladstone, however, awarded him a further hundred pounds to cover his exertions. The Charity Organisation Society now took up the interest of the emigrant, and he was invited to join its deputation to the President of the Local Government Board.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> His *Travels in Search of a Settlers' Guide-book* gives an account of his second tour in America. Parts of this are reproduced in *Bygones*, and this gives the solution of a small mystery that may have puzzled attentive readers of the work. On p. 173 (vol. ii) he says: "As we were leaving the sleepy Falls of Montmorency in the carriage, we looked out to see whether the Frenchman had got sight of us." There is no previous reference to a Frenchman in *Bygones*, but in the book from which the passage is taken there is, before this sentence, a long account of an importunate French-Canadian beggar.

## CHAPTER XXII

### THE *PRESENT DAY*

DURING the three years that separated his two visits to America Holyoake proceeded with quiet industry in the advocacy of the causes he cherished. There were few episodes of very great interest, but the life he led was by no means that of a superannuated man. He was chairman of the Travelling Tax Committee, member of and lecturer for the southern section of the Co-operative Central Board, one of the active leaders of the British Secular Union, a useful worker in the Sunday League and in the Liberal party, and a busy journalist and author; and he was always pressing for small pieces of reform—such as the opening of the Lambeth Palace grounds—that were suggested to him. The chief occurrences of the next few years were a fresh outbreak in the Secularist movement and some political activity in connection with the famous Irish agitation of the eighties. These occurrences led him to take up once more the adventurous position of editor, and issue the *Present Day*; but a few smaller events must be chronicled before we reach them.

The work in which he described his impressions of America was followed by an ample biography of Joseph Rayner Stephens. After his sixtieth year the remainder of those who had acted with him in the stirring scenes of his early manhood passed rapidly from the stage, and in the course of the eighties even his companions of a

later date disappeared for the most part. Stephens was a Lancashire clergyman who, though a Tory and Royalist in politics, was so deeply stirred by the condition of the factory children that he advocated armed resistance with the most violent of the Chartists. He was "one of the most eloquent orators on the Chartist side," and served a long term of imprisonment for his speeches. Holyoake had often visited him, and greatly admired him. His biographical sketch is coloured with personal recollection of the vivid life of the forties, that seemed so remote and romantic even twenty years ago. They were, in truth, so remote—England had made such advance during Holyoake's time—that Mr. Storr, a nephew of Stephens, who induced Holyoake to write the book, actually begged Sir William Harcourt to present a copy of it to the Queen.

The annual congresses of the Co-operative body continued to form important events in his calendar. In 1879 his friend Professor Stewart presided over the Congress at Gloucester, and Gloucester Jail was visited by Co-operative pilgrims, as I have said. In 1880 the Congress was held at Newcastle, and the Bishop of Durham presided. Holyoake was the guest of the Spence Watsons during the Congress, and he made friendly acquaintance with the bishop. A pencil note he has preserved runs :

"G. J. Holyoake, Esq., is respectfully invited to lunch with the Lord Bishop at the Douglas Hotel at the close of the morning sitting."

He lent the bishop books dealing with early co-operation some time afterwards. One or two other letters of the period show the ease with which he contracted friendship with clergymen. The Rev. W. Sharman of Plymouth (afterwards Preston) was one of

his liveliest correspondents and friends. He writes at this period :

“Concerning your desire to enter St. George’s Guild, I see two lions in the way. Lion No. 1 is the vow. This vow must be copied and subscribed to by every applicant for admission. The opening words are : ‘I trust in the living God, Father Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth, and of all things and creatures, visible and invisible.’

“Lion No. 2 is the rule requiring the gift of a tithe of capital or income. Further the ideal of the Guild is quite of what you would call the ‘paternal type,’ which you abhor. If I can give you further help or information, inquire within..

“I shall spend the summer in a cottage on Dartmoor. Cannot you visit us there? Cream ad lib. and absolute idleness! Heaven—without the damp clouds and the noise of harps.”

Mr. Haweis writes to him :

“I am vastly indebted to you for the loan of your most interesting Garibaldi relics, and as I see you are now in London may I hope to have the pleasure of your company here at lunch next Wednesday at 1½. I have known of your liberal and philanthropic views so long that I seem already to know you.”

Holyoake answered :

“As I have long included yourself among the clergymen I honour for generous mindfulness of things of this world as well as those which are vocational, I shall gladly join you at lunch on Wednesday—providing fog, or snow, or rain, does not viciously intervene.”

In 1881 Lord Derby presided at the Congress, and in 1882 Lord Reay. The reader will recognise them as his earlier friends, Lord Stanley and Baron Mackay. The elder Earl of Derby (also a correspondent of

Holyoake's) died in 1869, and his son might have led the Tory party in the House of Lords if he had had ambition. He was, however, not only retiring, but had Liberal leanings, and in 1880 he formally seceded to the Liberals. I find him writing to Holyoake at the time :

"I thank you for your letter of the 17th, and for helping to fight my battle at Brighton. I do not think Mr. Ashbury ever fully appreciated or understood the gravity of the charge which he had made, but I do not regret its having been made, as such imputations may circulate a long while in society without the person affected even knowing of their existence; and it is only by public discussion that they can be finally cleared off.

"I take the opportunity of saying that I have read with much interest your history of the Co-operative movement."

Holyoake had taken journalistic part in the defence of Lord Derby, when he left the Conservative party. Six years later, when the Liberals split over the Irish question, he joined the Unionists, and led them in the House of Lords until 1891.

In 1882 the Co-operative Congress was held at Oxford, with Lord Reay in the chair. The vote of thanks to Lord Reay was seconded by Goldwin Smith, who was visiting England at the time. In the course of his brief speech in the Sheldonian Theatre he said :

"England has escaped, as Lord Reay said in his address, from the severe friction, and worse than friction, of the industrial movement in other countries. She owes that exemption, no doubt, to very various causes, to the good sense and sterling character of her working men, and to the generally liberal character of her institutions—(hear, hear)—but she owes it among other causes

to this, that the movement has had far better leaders here than it has had elsewhere. (Hear, hear.) It has been led by men like Mr. Holyoake—(applause)—who were not self-seekers, who were not demagogues, who had nothing at heart but the real interest of the working class, and who, when conflicts arose between employers and employees, were not for interminable war, to their own profit, but for peace with justice."

Holyoake's diary records that he "dined with the President of Trinity, the Rev. Dr. Percival," and a couple of days later "spoke in Trinity Hall at the request of the President."

About the same date Sir Charles Dilke writes that he hears Holyoake is going to Paris "to give information to the French associated industries as to the working of such bodies in England." He adds: "I am very glad to hear it, as your book and your past life show how admirably well fitted you are for the task." The journey does not seem to have taken place at that time, but a letter to Holyoake from M. Barberet, of the French Home Office, shows that he was already rendering service in connection with Co-operation abroad. Co-operators may care to see a translation of it:

"I have received the letter and the documents you have been pleased to send me, at the request of our common friend, W. de Fonvielle. I thank you very much for your extreme kindness. I am greatly interested in Co-operative Societies here, especially productive societies. There are already a dozen of them at Paris, and many of them are making satisfactory progress. We have, in addition, a score of distributive societies. I shall endeavour to make myself closely acquainted with your achievements so as to derive instruction for our industrial societies. I am also going to see W. de Fonvielle again and have a longer talk with him, in regard to his correspondence with you—a

correspondence that is bound to be of service to English and French workers."

The death of George Eliot (December 1880) has echoes in his correspondence during these years. Lewes had died in 1878, and George Eliot had not long been Mrs. Cross, when she caught a chill at a concert and succumbed to the effects of it. Her married life at once became a subject of discussion. Atkinson wrote to Holyoake with some severity about it. "Miss Martineau and I," he said, "disapproved of Miss Evans living with Lewes, his wife living with Thornton Hunt, and *his* wife also alive; her great cleverness was no condonation." He quotes the Stoic Antoninus: "That which is not good for the swarm, neither is it good for the bee." Mr. W. M. W. Call (author of the article on George Eliot in the *Westminster Review*) wrote to Holyoake in her defence against some of Atkinson's strictures.

"As long ago as 1871," he says, "George Eliot was not only an unbeliever in Christianity, but an anti-theist and an anti-pantheist. She spoke herself of her oscillation, but I did not ask her how long the oscillation had continued. I stated exactly what I knew when I wrote: 'In 1871, perhaps much earlier, the oscillation had ceased.' I first saw Lewes in 1851, and George Eliot in 1857. My wife (whose bridesmaid she was in 1843) knew more of her than I did at the time of her second marriage to myself in 1857. . . . Some of the statements in the article come from the Brays, who have read and approve of it."

The second half of 1882 and the early part of 1883 were occupied with the mission to America and the work that issued from it. In the meantime events had once more brought Secular interests to the foreground in his mind. I have already spoken of the renewed friction with Bradlaugh, apropos of the Parliamentary



oath, and need not recur to it. It will be of interest only to see how Holyoake's attitude was judged by his great American colleague, Col. Ingersoll. A biographer needs some moral courage to reproduce Ingersoll's extraordinary compliments to Holyoake, but the great ability and legal experience of the writer, and the attempts that have been made to represent Holyoake's position as an isolated one amongst heretics, justify one in reproducing the following passages from letters that Ingersoll wrote him immediately after the last difference with Bradlaugh :

[Jan. 1st, 1883.] "We have missed you every day, and every day we talk about you and yours. You are the model man. You are so kind, candid, just, forgiving, and generous, and withal so uncompromising, so perfectly true to conviction, so ready to do and to suffer for the right, so severe with yourself and so easy with others, that we cannot help admiring and loving you. Besides, you have such a vein of genuine humour, such a keen sense of the ridiculous and absurd, that you are certainly the prince of companions. I am writing just what I feel, and it makes no difference whether you agree with me or not. I know what you are, and how infinitely true—how unspeakably honest and brave you have been, are, and always will be. There is no living man for whom I have greater respect and admiration."

Holyoake's reply shows no trace of an attitude to provoke such phrases. He says simply :

"My days have all been brighter since I received your letter. It is not necessary to take unto myself all the terms which your bountiful friendship employs—to feel proud of the generous partiality from which they proceed. As though I were still with you I watch all you do, and read all that Mr. Farrell in his kindness sends me that you say. If you fight X (some controversial opponent), do it with a sword, when you can cleave

him in twain with one blow, as from the arm of Gog or Magog. If pistols must be used, I crave to enter the lists for you. You are too palpable a mark, while I, attenuated and only semi-visible, could ill be seen by the mangy eyes of the adversary, and would be ill to hit if observed. Give my card to the Canine Cuss."

In August Ingersoll writes that Holyoake's English critics are discussing him in American freethought papers.

"A couple of poor little articles appeared in the *Investigator*. . . . The articles, of course, could do you no possible harm. But they gave me an opportunity to tell (partly) what I think of you."

A month later he writes :

"Yours of the 10th received to-day. To see your writing on an envelope sends a thrill through my blood. I feel the grasp of your hand, and for an instant look into your eyes. You need not thank me for any words of mine. I was paid when I wrote them. It was a positive pleasure to say a sentence or two in favour of one of the best of men. I feel under personal obligation to you. You have shown me such a great and generous heart—such a clear head—such serenity—such candour—such trust, after all, in the blundering world and in even the accidents of this wondrous succession of stumbles towards the right. I see that Bradlaugh has taken the trouble to say a word in the '*Investigator*' about you. It is of no consequence. Let it go."

The trouble with Mr. Bradlaugh at this time was not in itself very serious, as I have said, but a fresh storm was preparing in the movement. Mr. G. W. Foote, the living President of the National Secular Society, had now a large following in the Secularist world, and we saw that Holyoake was in 1880 co-operating with him in the British Secular Union and its organ, the *Secular Review*. A writer in that journal adopted a kind of

phraseology that was strongly resented by Holyoake, who indignantly severed his connection with it. The plea of the writer was that obstinate prejudices were beyond the appeal of reason, and could be shaken only by violent caricature and ridicule. Holyoake had seen the method tried forty years before, and his own successful experience of gentlemanly procedure had made him more hostile than ever to the coarser style. Not long after there appeared the *Freethinker*, which was at first published by Bradlaugh and Mrs. Besant; but the increasing vulgarity of its contents caused them to abandon it to Mr. Foote and Mr. Ramsey. At length the blasphemy law was invoked, and legal proceedings were initiated. After some abortive attempts to involve Mr. Bradlaugh, the editor, publisher, and printer of the *Freethinker* were arraigned for issuing blasphemous libels, and, after a trial in which Mr. Justice North betrayed the most violent partisanship, Mr. Foote was condemned to a year's imprisonment.

There were few Rationalists of any distinction in England who did not condemn the coarse caricatures of Biblical passages that had occasioned the trial. Some, like Mr. Morley, thought the prosecution justified. But the revival of the blasphemy law, on which the prosecution proceeded, and the severity of the sentence, were widely condemned, and even resented by some clergymen. A petition for the reduction of the sentence was drawn up, and Holyoake, amongst others, was asked to sign it. His refusal to do so is still cherished in some parts of the Secularist world as one of his acts of "treachery." Many others hesitated to sign a petition that seemed to associate them, in some way, with proceedings that were repellent to them. Professor Tyndall, for instance, attached the following note to his signature on the petition :

"Believing the 'punishment' to be 'excessive,' I sign this memorial. I would, however, remark that the ribaldry in which certain professed freethinkers of our day do not scruple to indulge renders them, in my opinion, the enemies of true freedom."

Holyoake's difficulty was a peculiar and characteristic one. It is plain enough to those who know his whole career. The memorial described itself as "humbly praying mercy" for Mr. Foote. This was one of the very last phrases that Mr. Foote would have used, and one that very ineptly expressed a demand for justice. No doubt, it was a mere technicality, a concession to the conventional forms of such memorials; but no heretic or Chartist of the older days would have put his name to it, and it is difficult to see how any can feel surprise that Holyoake would not. When, further, we find that he wrote a letter to the Home Secretary, pleading that the sentences were unjustly excessive—a letter that was calculated to have far more effect than his signing the petition—we may dismiss at once the charge that he betrayed any frailty of character or sacrifice of conviction. It will be enough to put on record his letter to Sir W. Vernon Harcourt, which he has often reproduced :

"SIR,—Two prisoners, Mr. Foote and Mr. Ramsey, are undergoing excessive sentences. Permit me to give reasons why they should be released. A Freethinker who believes what he is doing to be right, never ceases to do it, equally as his adversaries do. I therefore ask for justice, not 'mercy.' I take Mr. Foote and Mr. Ramsey's method of advocacy to be a principle with them, and therefore I think that their sentences should be terminated as a matter of justice. Blasphemy is the sin of all sects, but only punished in the weakest. There is, however, one thing more repulsive than blasphemy, and that is outrage. I do not pretend that outrage is

either undefinable or unpunishable under impartial law. Outrage, as they who commit it know full well, is when one imputes to others a conscious infamy of belief which they do not hold, and intends to shock, or irritate, or offend them, regardless whether it pains them or not. This is outrage, and, in the interests of society and good feeling, should be discouraged. Yet this outrage is constantly committed by Christian preachers and writers against Freethinkers, and the law never steps in to protect them. Since, therefore, the law does not deem it its duty to defend the few against the many, it is not needful or seemingly that it should be employed to defend the many against the few. Outrage may be committed in excitement or under provocation, and is then an error rather than a crime; while outrage, as a method of argument, whether employed by the few or the many, is a pole-cat policy, which induces every self-regarding person to keep clear of the cause which adopts it, whether it be Freethought or Christianity. Therefore, in a civilised community, intellectual outrage may be left to its own consequences, and needs not that the law should decrease them by sentences which, by exciting public sympathy, obscure the intrinsic hatefulness of the offence. Since the country regards you as a Home Secretary who would not do wrong under intimidation, nor be deterred from doing right by unreflecting prejudice, I venture to submit these considerations to you."

A few months earlier he had had a memorial presented to the House, praying that members (*i. e.*, Bradlaugh) might be permitted to affirm instead of taking the oath. Prof. Thorold Rogers, who presented it, described it as "the quintessence of good sense and morality." We may repeat the phrase of his appeal for Mr. Foote. Holyoake continued to work for the repeal of the blasphemy laws. In 1886 we find him advocating it on the platform (at South Place Chapel) with the Revs. Stewart Headlam, W. E. Moll, Philip Wicksteed, and W.

Sharman, Messrs. W. Morris, H. Burrows, F. Verinder, G. W. Foote, and Mrs. Besant.

The trial of Mr. Bradlaugh (and a second trial of Foote and Ramsey) came on before the Lord Chief Justice a little later. Lord Coleridge won the respect of Freethinkers by his clear ruling and his effort to administer the law with rigid justice, while his own religious convictions were so much against the accused. Holyoake had censured him somewhat severely for his conduct of the case against Pooley in 1857, though not so severely as Buckle had done. He now wrote to Lord Coleridge to express admiration.

"Your great predecessor, Lord Cockburn," he said, "made all Englishmen his debtors because he increased the opportunities of liberty to just men, and restricted those of aggressors. I am one of those who think that your Lordship has shown a like quality of mind where we least expected it."

Lord Coleridge answered immediately, in a curious letter :

"I have the honour to acknowledge your letter of the 26th and the extracts from newspapers which accompanied it. I am not conscious of having altered my opinion or changed the expression of it since I was counsel in the case of Pooley. I believe I used substantially the same language as counsel in that case and as judge in the cases of Mr. Bradlaugh, Mr. Ramsey, and Mr. Foote. There was, I remember, a controversy over that case, discreditable to no one but Mr. Buckle ; but the controversy was provoked by certain ignorant falsehoods of Mr. Buckle, and had nothing to do with the law ; while both judge and counsel laid the law down precisely as I laid it down a few weeks ago.

"It somewhat astonished me that in your present kindly letter you should say that you did not expect me to

favour liberty of thought. But I cannot expect my countrymen to be at the pains to study the character of so very unimportant a person as myself."

Holyoake wrote again to assure him that, though he had supplied Buckle with facts, he did not concur in his expressions, and had since modified in print his own comments on the case. He urged that Lord Coleridge's recent judgment "will always be as memorable as it was generous," and reminded him that they had met at a friend's house since the Cornish trial, so that he was better acquainted with him.

"I thank you very much," Lord Coleridge replied, "for the courtesy of your last letter. I suppose the good opinion of his countrymen is a thing of value to any man; certainly it is to me."

Other friendly letters came, under the heavy seal of the Lord Chief Justice, but I will quote only from the last, which was addressed from Heath's Court in 1886:

"I am much gratified by your letter and the paper which you have sent me. It is consistent with all I have ever known of you as a controversial writer. The world would be a better place if all men were as fair and honourable as you. Of Mr. Buckle I know nothing but what that pamphlet reveals. The assumption of research, the ignorance, the presumption, the vulgar swagger (I am sorry to use such an expression, but I can find no one better) which that article revealed satisfied me of the worthlessness of such a man as an authority on any subject whatever that requires both learning, modesty, and candour for its handling; and his reply to my reply (which you do not appear to have seen) was one of the very shabbiest papers I ever read . . . merely backing out (by way of suggestion, not manly assertion) of the *meaning* which every man of sense, of common honesty, must have seen he intended to convey.

"If ever I reprint some of my papers, I shall certainly reprint this amongst them, with all the more pleasure that it will give me an occasion for saying with how much respect and good feeling I encounter a controversialist like yourself."

Although he was now approaching the "three score years and ten" that are understood to mark the limit of activity, Holyoake made a fresh effort to restore Secularism to the lines on which he had first placed it. The neutral observer must be puzzled at times to discover in Secularist writings broad hints that Holyoake was a man of compromise, moving uneasily amidst the group of their less flexible protagonists. Now, if there were one agitation which it would have been to Holyoake's interest to abandon, it would surely be this; and if there were one agitation which he could in any decade have found a score of decent pretexts to abandon, it would again be this. Yet we find him returning time after time to this work, which he knew to be distasteful to the vast majority of his friends, in spite of all the thorns that were scattered in his way. Only a profound truth to conviction—whatever one may think of the conviction—can explain it. But no writers of his time, not even the most extreme Conservatives or Churchmen, have said a tithe of the unpleasant things that have been said of him by Secularists. Well might Ingersoll essay to make some reparation.

Shortly after he severed his connection with Mr. Foote in 1882 his friends began to discuss with him the advisability of founding a new journal. Joseph Ellis (author of *Cæsar in Egypt*) suggested the name of *The Philosopher*, and begged his "dear master" and "dear Plato" to edit it. The *Freethinker*, on the one hand, had reduced his proud ideal of Secularism to the drawing of "Comic Bible Sketches"—a revival of the crudest device of Ryall



and Paterson and some French writers—and the Bradlaugh group, on the other, were again attacking him. He decided to restore the broad *Secular Review* he had founded in 1876, under a different name, so in June 1883 he began to issue the *Present Day*. He had planned it, he says, during his sail up the St. Lawrence in 1882, though he had then intended to call it the *Secular Citizen*. It appeared monthly for more than three years, Holyoake editing the first 36 numbers of it. The object of the journal was to restore Secularism to its original broad base. In the first issue he criticised severely the “new Freethinkers” who made a point of committing the very outrages that Freethinkers had been accustomed to deplore in their opponents. Co-operation and other social and political matters were dealt with in the same proportion as theological.

One cannot help noting that Holyoake was really guilty of much the same fault of perception as he had discovered in the Owenites. The time had come for his ideal to break up into its constituent aims. Co-operation was now embodied in a powerful specific movement: education had passed into the hands of national administrators: political work of any shade had vast organisations to promote it. It was useless now to attempt to hold these things together. The real reform open to him (as he realised later) was to initiate a cultural movement that should make theological criticism a part of its positive educational work. No doubt, it is easy to understand his lingering regard for the older ideal. So long as he had commanded the field, his Secularist ideal had had remarkable success. But with three able rivals now dividing the movement, each with his personal following, each opposed to the other, but all united in the more popular position of making atheism or agnosticism the dominant note (Bradlaugh, Foote, and Ross), the *Present*

*Day* could not attain the prestige of the old *Reasoner*. The age of specialism had set in. The paper won respect, but not a large circulation. "I know that nothing unworthy of the pen of a gentleman will be published in *your* paper," Tyndall said in subscribing to it.

Francis Newman admired the journal, and his letters at the time have passages of interest.

"In my old age," he writes in 1884, "I seem to undergo a transformation very rare. I say, I *seem*; but I do not believe there is any real change. I have become decidedly Democratic. But it is through utter despair of our now ruling classes. Those called Liberal disgust and shock me in 9 cases out of 10 as much as Tories."

He had started the *Christian Commonwealth*, and was trying to found a "League of Justice." Able as he was, Francis Newman's failure was as constant as his brilliant brother's success. His political ideas grew darker and darker. In 1885 he wrote of Gladstone's "blank treason" and the "fatal demoralisation of both parties;" while he regarded the Queen and the ex-Empress as "the source of the demoralisation." In 1886, when Holyoake abandoned the paper, Newman wrote:

"I have not been able to feel *practical* interest in your publication; but I have all along esteemed your uprightness, and believed you in your sphere to be a valuable worker and an aid towards truth. As a 'Secularist' I have always thought you two-thirds right—*i. e.*, that Christians largely fail of good results by wasting their efforts unduly about a better world. But I have now to tell you, as a matter not yet to be published, what I fear must give much pain to my valued friends such as Dr. James Martineau and Miss Cobbe, from whom I have always differed in their wonderful blindness as to defects of moral character in Jesus of Nazareth. . . . I hope and intend ere long to publish a tract or treatise called *Life*

*after Death*, in which, on moral and spiritual grounds (as well as physical), I decisively argue down the dogma of human immortality. . . . James Martineau writes to me that *if* he believed the three gospels as much as I do (!), he would probably be forced to nearly my results concerning the character of Jesus."

In the course of 1884 the *Present Day* had to chronicle two events of importance, in very different ways, to Holyoake. The first was the death of Mrs. Holyoake. Her health failing, he had taken her from Harrow to Brighton, and there she contracted a fatal attack of bronchitis. She died in January 1884, in the sixty-fifth year of her age and the forty-fifth year of her married life. It was some comfort that she who had shared with honour and courage the hardships of his early manhood should have lived to share his harvest of distinction. But "loss is loss—let men say what they will," Stopford Brooke wrote to him. Though she had fully sympathised in all his work, and so greatly helped it by her happy control of the home, she never wholly abandoned her early religious views; he had scrupulously refrained from touching them. Stopford Brooke was unable to officiate at her funeral, and Holyoake would not have the usual service. She had, in fact, wished that a few living words should be said over her grave, such as she knew her husband often spoke at Secular burials. Holyoake himself conducted the service. He read the conversation between the angel Uriel and the prophet Esdras from the Bible, and Stopford Brooke's letter to himself. Then he said a few words of appreciation of her fine character and her life-long service, and Mr. C. D. Collet sang Miss Martineau's hymn, "Beneath the starry arch," as he had done over the grave of their boy Max many years before.

The other important event—apart from his being made

an honorary member of the Cobden Club—chronicled in the *Present Day* in 1884 was the abolition of the tax on the fares of third-class passengers. Few, probably, of the working men who profited by this change knew how much they were indebted to Holyoake, and his old colleague, C. D. Collet, in regard to this relief. The story of the Travelling Tax Abolition Committee has none of the romance of their earlier fight for the abolition of the “taxes on knowledge.” On that account, and because so much now presses for notice, I make the story a short one; but the life of the committee was long and laborious. Holyoake was chairman of it for twenty-four years, and during that period he presided at most of its Monday meetings, agitated amongst influential parliamentary friends, and brought the subject to public notice in the press. When Mr. Childers abolished the tax (on third-class fares) in 1884, the workers of the country owed one more debt to G. J. Holyoake.

The tax dated from 1832, when the early railway-coaches were put on a level with the stage-coaches. Ten years later Sir R. Peel reduced it, but—“with a sense of humiliation,” he said—he retained a tax of five per cent. on the fare of every passenger. In 1844 the Cheap Trains Act brought some relief from this odious tax. Every railway company was directed to run one train the full length of its line each way every day, stopping at all the intermediate stations, and not charging more than one penny per mile for the third-class coaches. The fares collected on these trains were exempt from duty. Poor workers were thus enabled to travel, slowly and with great discomfort, from one town to another at a moderate expense. As the trunk lines extended to greater length, the law lost much of its utility, and further relief was sought. The Board of Trade then

directed that the cheap trains need not go the full length of the line, and need not stop at every station, and third-class traffic enormously increased. But the direction was illegal, and the Revenue officials won the case that they brought against the Board of Trade in 1874.

In 1876 the Travelling Tax Abolition Committee began its systematic exertions for the repeal of the tax, in the interest of the passenger. Collet was secretary, and Holyoake chairman. The romantic methods of their earlier campaign were no longer of use, and the work attracted little notice ; but Holyoake's letters and diaries show that a great deal of work was done. One device only need be mentioned. They attempted to show that the tramways were just as liable to the tax as the trains. The increased burden would, of course, prove too much for the people, and a public agitation would have followed. Yet Mr. Childers naively expressed to Holyoake his astonishment that he, of all men, should urge the taxing of tramways ! Mr. Childers had succeeded Gladstone as Chancellor of the Exchequer in 1882, and he found himself with a prospective surplus of  $2\frac{1}{2}$  millions on his first budget. The Committee at once increased its exertions, and Mr. Childers announced that he would abolish the tax on all fares of one penny per mile, or less. There are letters from Holyoake to Mr. Chamberlain and other influential speakers in the interest of the Bill, and a letter in which he thanks Mr. Childers for removing "the humiliation—that a commercial nation should fine the industrious for moving about, and tax the workman on his way in search of employment." Childers replied : "I am very glad that you approve of the Budget and of my statements. One or two of the Irish members called it a rich man's Budget, but I think that this could

hardly be said of the exemption of the poor man's railway fares from all taxation."

The tax was thus abolished on penny fares in 1884, and the popular grievance removed. But it was felt by the Committee that the whole tax on travelling by rail ought to be abolished, and it continued its work. Until his last years Holyoake remained chairman, and took a great interest in its operations. The only recognition he received, as far as I can gather, was that the Midland Company gave him a free pass on its lines. He was restless in his search for opportunities of usefulness to the community. In the same year, 1884, he noticed that the foot-passengers to the South Kensington Exhibition ran great risk in crossing the wide and busy street from the station. His letters in the press led to the making of a "refuge" in the middle of the street. About the same time he was agitating for the opening of the grounds of Lambeth Palace to the children of the poor, as we shall see.

In the same year, 1884, he made his third and last effort to enter Parliament. A few words will suffice to recall the political development up to that year. The Liberals had returned to power in 1880, and Holyoake, now on friendly terms with half the members of the Administration (Gladstone, Forster, Childers, Mundella, Chamberlain, Dilke, and James), looked forward to another span of progressive legislation. Then there came the storm of Irish discontent that convulsed British politics for the better half of the decade. There had been great distress in Ireland in 1879, and the return of Gladstone to power had been hailed with exaggerated expectations. When it was discovered that the Queen's Speech contained no reference to Irish reform, the Irish members, now led with consummate cleverness by Parnell, entered upon the scriptural policy of importunacy

with unrestrained energy. During the summer vacation of that year Sir H. James wrote to Holyoake, from the deck of the "Grantully Castle," on which he accompanied the Premier. Speaking of the rough weather, he says : "The shore of Ireland by now affords some protection, and for once one may be glad that the whole of that island is not under the Channel." In a previous letter he had spoken of Cowen and his prospects with enthusiasm. "There are men in the Ministry who might well be envious of his talents," he says. Now (early in 1881) he writes : "What a pity that Cowen has thrown away such a splendid political reputation on behalf of two such miserable causes as that of the Jingoës and of these men. He is rushing downwards at full tilt. *Facilis descensus !*"

It was to be a decade of storms and sundering, and, amidst all his occupation, Holyoake watched the tossing of the Liberal ship with great concern. Gladstone endeavoured to meet the agitation with a Land Bill, but it failed to satisfy, and the whole of the United Kingdom rang with the struggle. Ireland was aflame with scarlet rhetoric and shaken with outrage, and its jails filled with political prisoners ; the House of Commons was paralysed with obstruction ; and the press recorded week by week the appalling advocacy of the Irish cause by dynamite. Holyoake's friends were hopelessly divided. Walter Morrison (who had vainly endeavoured to find a constituency) wrote in the same letter of "these Irish assassins" and the "miserable muddle" of the Government. Goldwin Smith wrote : "My Radical friends have no doubt their philanthropic reasons for fomenting and encouraging Irish revolution, but I think they will do humanity a wrong if they allow a great civilisation to be torn to pieces by Dynamite and Connaught."

Holyoake's own feeling is little expressed. He never hesitated in his support of Gladstone, but the question of coercion apparently puzzled him. The question of the parliamentary oath was a clearer issue to him, and it was in that interest that he wished to enter the House.

✓ A vacancy occurred at Leicester in 1884, owing to the retirement of P. A. Taylor. Holyoake was at the time working in connection with the representation of Brighton, but he felt that Leicester was one of the few towns where he had a chance of succeeding, and he immediately went there. His chief object was, he told them, "to aid in the settlement of the Parliamentary oath question," and Leicester had shown strong support of Mr. Bradlaugh. A cutting from the *New York Tribune* describes him as saying that he "would take no oath, either by speech or pantomime," and that in politics he was "neither Tory, Radical, Social Democrat, nor Reformer by confiscation, but a thick-and-thin, up-and-down, now-and-all-the-time follower of Mr. Gladstone." He at once wrote and printed an address to the Liberal Council, explaining his aims. "If," he said, "you think it worth while to assist in opening a door in Parliament through which a gentleman and an honest man can enter without shame or humiliation, I offer you my services."

The determination to refuse the oath (which meant exclusion from the House), his known heresies, and his Co-operative apostleship (which generally alarmed Liberal shopkeepers) were not overpowering recommendations to a Council that had before it, beside his own, the names of R. Chamberlain, J. A. Picton, Fred. Harrison, Joseph Arch, J. Passmore Edwards, and Herbert Spencer. Once more he did not get ✓ beyond the stage of issuing an election-address. There was, however, consolation in the number of votes cast



for him on the Council, in spite of his obvious inability to enter the House if he were returned. The highest number of votes cast for any nominee did not reach three figures; and Holyoake obtained fifty votes.

From Leicester he returned to Brighton, where there was a peculiar difficulty to deal with. As in earlier years, he was still often consulted, and his aid sought, by either candidates or constituencies. In 1880 Mr. W. Morrison wrote repeatedly to ask him to find a plausible county for him. In 1883 he pressed Mr. Morley to contest Newcastle, which Mr. Morley successfully did. During the general election of 1885 he was in correspondence with many candidates—Mr. A. Henriquez, who acknowledges help at Walworth, Lord Lorne (in South Kensington), and others. He even corresponded with friends at Birmingham (S. Timmins and Edmund Tonks) with a view to contesting one of its seats again. But his most interesting experience was at Brighton, where the Liberal representative, Mr. Marriott, had seceded to the Conservatives and retained his seat.

Holyoake's connection with Brighton began at a much earlier date. As early as 1877 I find Mr. Mayall proposing to make him the chief writer of a paper he is trying to purchase in that town. Two years later we find him active in Brighton affairs. A Quaker had given the town £500 for the purchase of books, and Holyoake wrote an address, that was largely signed in the town, praying him to add a stipulation that the library be opened on Sundays. In 1882 he seems to have coveted the aldermanic gown. "I am very much afraid," Mr. G. Mainwaring writes to him, "that you are not eligible for an aldermanship in our august body, as we only appoint those who know how not to do anything, and faithfully carry out that precept, and assist others in preventing any general good being

done, unless it's done in your own street." He had many friends living at Brighton, and spent a good deal of time with them. When the election of 1880 approached, he was requested by the Liberal Council, not a very energetic body at that time, to report on the several qualifications, as parliamentary candidates, of Mr. Hollond and Mr. Marriott. He says that his report ran: "Mr. Hollond is a gentleman: Mr. Marriott a lawyer." But I fear that was written in the light of later developments. In point of fact, he had the following letter on Mr. Marriott from Mr. Morley (in 1879):

"I see that you have got, or are going to have, my friend Mr. Marriott as candidate for Brighton. He is one of my oldest and most intimate friends, and I hope he will get in. He is not quite so Radical as you or I, but then Brighton would not stand our Radicalism. He will conciliate the moderates and perhaps a section of the Tories, and as the great object is to win a seat for a man who will vote for turning out Ld. B. & Co., that is a consideration."

Marriott was accepted and returned, and a few years later Holyoake was asked to help in dealing with the "parliamentary prestidigitator, who was performing at Brighton in a patent reversible overcoat," as he puts it in the *Present Day*. Admiral Maxse wrote to him on the matter:

"I enclose you a mem. of my letter to F. Harrison which caused him to be so vicious. It would have served him right if I had published his replies. The Brighton affair is bad; it reveals a low morality in the constituency and want of intelligence. I know *as a fact* that Marriott did apply for a vacancy on the Indian Council (Sir H. Maine could say something if he chose

to), and some days after his refusal commenced his attack on Liberals."

Holyoake seems to have been requested to find a fresh candidate. Sir Charles Dilke writes to say that he does not know of a candidate. Lord Grosvenor suggests to Holyoake the Lord Mayor of London.

"If," he says, "we could put some pepper into him, he might be a useful candidate, as he *knows* that it would be a losing game, and others will find that out and leave you at the last moment. Meantime I am sorry to say that I have not the article that you want ready to hand. It is a combination of qualities that you don't often get, unless there is a fondness for drink also combined, and two of your types have (or had) that."

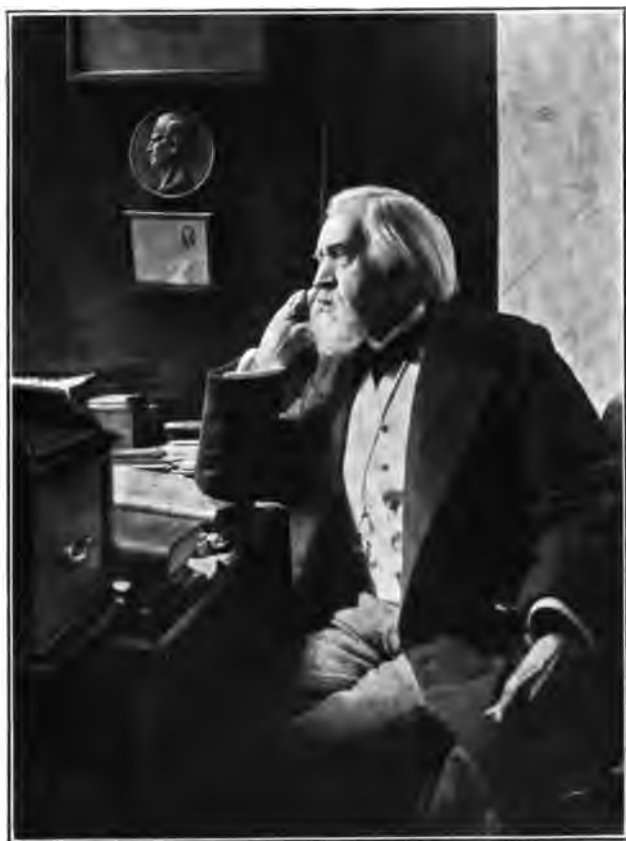
A few weeks later he wrote that he was urging the Lord Mayor to accept. "We must try and get him to do so, and smooth his injured feelings, though I must confess that if I was in his position I would see Brighton further first." Holyoake in turn wrote to the Lord Mayor, and the offer was accepted. The general election took place in June, and the Liberals of Brighton suffered with their colleagues over the country. "Probyn made a splendid candidate," Holyoake wrote to Lord Grosvenor, "but both [he and Hollond] were too decorous to confront the mugwump Marriott. They wanted gentlemanly devilry."

There was a reorganisation of the Liberal forces in Brighton after the election, in which Holyoake took an active part,<sup>1</sup> and before long he entered his watch-tower over its civic affairs at Eastern Lodge. But a few busy years intervene before he leaves London, and political events continued to engage him. After a very

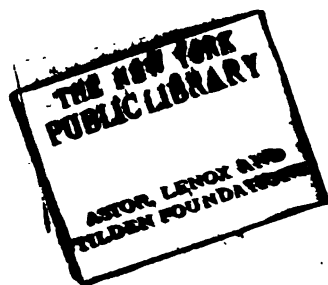
<sup>1</sup> He also published at that time his *Patriotism by Charity*—a pamphlet on electoral organisation.

brief Tory rule under Lord Salisbury during 1885, the general elections, in December, sent Mr. Gladstone back to power with a majority of 84 over the Conservatives, but with a balancing vote of 86 Irish Nationalists to face. Before long the rumour began to circulate that Gladstone had adopted the idea of Home Rule, and in April 1886 he evoked a fresh storm with his Home Rule Bill. Then came the secession of Mr. Chamberlain, the formation of the Liberal Unionist party, and the crushing defeat, in July, of the Liberals and Irish by the combined Unionists and Conservatives.

The opportunity is a good one for inserting the correspondence that Holyoake had with some of the chief actors in the political drama.



GEORGE JACOB HOLYOAKE  
(1901)



## CHAPTER XXIII

### CORRESPONDENCE WITH GLADSTONE AND CHAMBERLAIN

A COMPLETE list of Holyoake's correspondents, even when we have excluded casual letters that indicate no personal relation, would not be the least interesting feature of his remarkable career. Few men in the course of the nineteenth century can have had a wider epistolary range. Chartists and peers, atheists and divines, artists and scientists, merchants and statesmen, lawyers and prisoners, revolutionaries and gentle ladies, scholars and workers—hardly a type of man or woman is missing from the list. I have read many thousand letters in the preparation of this work, and they have conjured up three generations with remarkable completeness. From the few I have been able to include the reader will have some impression of their infinite variety. They are monotonous only in their tributes to his character and his services.

It will be interesting to glance at the full correspondence with one or two men of greater importance. We have seen that Holyoake was always thwarted in his efforts to gain the central stage of the political world. His service even in this world was very great indeed : his political pamphlets, his fifty years of political journalism, his incessant lectures on the broad principles and moral aspects of politics, and his active share in the conduct of some scores of Liberal candidatures. In a sense, however, he did always remain on the fringe of

the political party for which he worked during more than half a century. It is therefore the more remarkable to find him holding the relations he does with the chiefs of that—and, to some extent, of the opposing—party. We have seen his association with Cobden, Bright, and Lord Derby, and with almost all the earlier leaders of the Radical group; and I have quoted as I proceeded a few of his letters from Forster, Morley, Dilke, Stansfeld, Lord Northbourne, Jesse Collings, and other prominent politicians.

More interesting in many respects are his relations with Gladstone. There could hardly be a more impressive testimony to his character and the usefulness of his life than in the cordial relations he had with that statesman for twenty years. Deeply abhorring unbelief as Gladstone did, disposed, as he was, to discover a weak or inferior character always associated with it, he nevertheless shows a regard for Holyoake that is not a mere recognition of political services or a respect for culture. They met for the first time in 1875 or 1876,<sup>1</sup> when Gladstone invited him to breakfast. His interest in Holyoake was largely grounded on his social and Co-operative work, but even attractive writers were not invited lightly to that famous breakfast-table at 73 Harley Street. Holyoake had seen Gladstone in the House, the hope of the Tories, in 1842, and was arrested by the sight of the "tall, pallid-faced young man with dark hair," to whom everybody paid attention. Twenty years later Holyoake helped to prepare the princely reception that Gladstone had at Newcastle, telling the readers of the *Chronicle* that they were to see a rare thing, "a Chancellor of the Exchequer with a conscience," the man who had removed "the taxes on knowledge." In 1868 he sent

<sup>1</sup> In *Bygones* Holyoake says 1877. But his diary gives the date June 22nd, 1876, for what he calls his "second breakfast" with Gladstone.



Gladstone a copy of his *Defence of the Ballot*, and was congratulated on his "able and manful defence." He had no answer when, in 1873, he sent Gladstone his defence of Mill ; but two years later, when he had sent some publications of his, he received the following acknowledgment :<sup>1</sup>

"DEAR SIR,

"I am very sensible of your kindness in sending me the works I have just received, and I shall examine them with great interest.

"Differing from you, I do not believe that secular motives are adequate either to propel or to restrain the children of our race, but I earnestly desire to hear the other side, and I appreciate the advantage of having it stated by sincere and highminded men. I hope that some day we may have an opportunity of touching on the subject in personal conference. In Co-operation I feel a lively and a friendly interest.

"Yours faithfully,

"W. E. GLADSTONE."

Shortly afterwards he was proud to receive his first invitation to breakfast. There were seven or eight guests (including the editor of the *Jewish World*), and in the course of conversation Gladstone turned to Holyoake, who sat next to him, to ask with some diffidence if he had read Newman's *Dream of Gerontius*. Gladstone was surprised to learn that he had read and admired it, as he had put the question previously to several breakfast-companies, and no one had read it. As they walked downstairs afterwards he congratulated Gladstone on the accuracy and fairness of some descriptions of heretical schools that he had recently given. Gladstone stopped him, and observed that he was pleased with the compliment. "For that is the quality in which you yourself

<sup>1</sup> Quoted in Morley's *Life of Gladstone*, though Holyoake's name is omitted.

excel," he said. Holyoake breakfasted again at Harley Street in 1876, the other guests being Morley, Knowles, Herbert (the artist), Bright, and the Rev. W. N. Molesworth, when Gladstone asked him "how the public could be interested in a measure devised for their benefit." Holyoake wrote to him afterwards:

"The conditions of association among the people are only in a humbler degree the same as among gentlemen. In a club gentlemen have refreshments according to their taste: read what books they please: discuss what topics they choose. The working people want to do the same. Being crowded in their daily lives, they have no sense of distinctness and deference to each other as gentlemen have. To allure them into association and compass its pleasant perpetuity, it is only needed to concede them the liberties of gentlemen, in their humbler way, and to exact agreement from each to be unimputative and void of offence towards the conviction of others."

Thanking Holyoake for his *History of Co-operation* in 1879, Gladstone wrote:

"DEAR MR. HOLYOAKE,

"I thank you much for your work, and I am glad you point out the difference between different kinds of co-operation. I do not feel sure, however, that all co-operative stores might not fairly be made to pay income tax.

"As to the upper Co-operation, in which I have never taken any part, I look upon it as a remedial effort to blow up and destroy that artificial and most injurious system of credit upon which the London tradesmen conduct their business—or a very large part of them. If they consult me, I shall earnestly advise them in this sense. The only cash tradesman I ever consulted told me he had derived benefit from the Stores, as his customers were now more accustomed to pay cash, which formerly he had a difficulty in making them do.

"Pray breakfast with me again on some Thursday at ten, after Easter, when we may, I hope, talk on your book."

Later they exchanged letters on the Bradlaugh episode and the railway tax, and in 1881 there was some interesting correspondence that needs a word of introduction. Mr. W. H. Duignan, a Walsall friend with influence in the party, was endeavouring to have Holyoake's name put on the Civil List, and had induced Sir C. Foster to secure it. During the negotiations Holyoake visited his old Chartist colleague, Thomas Cooper, and, finding him in much poverty, determined to have the pension transferred to him. He wrote to Mr. Duignan :

"What will you say to me? I have done a thing which disqualifies me from availing myself of the negotiation you so kindly asked Sir C. Foster to undertake on my behalf, and he should be told of it. It must stand over: indeed, be abandoned now. I have been visiting my old friend Thomas Cooper at Lincoln. With bronchitis upon him he was going out, and has gone out, lecturing and preaching in the inclement weather at 76. He consulted me as to the prospect of a memorial being presented to Mr. Gladstone to place him on the Pension List for such addition to his limited income as may save him from labour beyond his years. To-day I have seen Mr. Mundella, who and Mr. Forster are attached friends of his, and I am to draw up the memorial and promote it for him. This will not disqualify me a future day, but I cannot be a candidate myself and do this. Had not my wife been near unto death when I entered into this, I would have come to you to consult you before taking this step. But my friend is more needy than I. Pray forgive me. My wife seems recovering, but is uncertain still."

Duignan tried to be angry, but he and the few others who knew of this generous act—performed, I may note,

at the time when Mrs. Besant and others were attacking Holyoake's character—were much impressed. Cooper received a grant of £300. "Your spontaneous goodness," he wrote to Holyoake, "almost startled me, although I had always believed in *you*, though *not* in your unbelief." Indirectly, the act led to a reconciliation with W. E. Forster, who behaved nobly to Cooper. "I wish you would let Mr. Holyoake know," he wrote to Cooper, "that it was with real pleasure I read his note and extracts. I have known for some time how kindly he was trying to get me fair play, and I have been grateful to him on both public and private grounds." Four years later he wrote direct to Holyoake :

"I am much obliged to you both for your kind letter and for your public support, and, I may add, for the friendship with which you have helped me through my Irish difficulties. These difficulties are no longer only, or even mainly, Irish. They concern the future of England and of Great Britain, and I am very uneasy about their present position. . . . My wife joins me in kindest regards."

† To return to Mr. Gladstone and 1881. Holyoake wrote to him :

"MY DEAR MR. GLADSTONE,

"A friendly accident has made me aware that someone, from generous regard for me, has asked you whether some gift or appointment could be accorded to me.

"1. After thinking of it I cannot reconcile myself to the idea that you, amid the unusual cares of State which concern the nation so much, and tax your strength which we could ill spare, should give heed to this thing. Should you deem the idea meet on any ground, please defer it to a distant, less onerous, and more fitting time.

"2. By an unprecedented act of regard for the working

class an appointment has been given to Mr. Prior. It would be ungenerous, and betray a want of self-respect, if a crowd of applicants should immediately appear from the working class, embarrassing ministers who have taken a friendly step towards them.

"3. There is Mr. Thomas Cooper, much older than myself, who from the days of his political imprisonment forty years ago until now has been an honest and brave teacher of working people. I found him lately in Lincoln, going out in his 76th year to preach Christianity, to which he is devoted, in inclement weather, because his slender income is too small for his needs. I have drawn up a memorial on his behalf, which Mr. Mundella will in due course place in your hands. Any claim made on my account would limit your means of considering his ; and that would give me pain.

"4. No minister can well help me. Anything I have done for the instruction or service of the working people, by Co-operative or other writings, do not stand apart in the public mind. I am equally known otherwise for the publicity of other convictions, and you would be made responsible for them. This would be an ill requital of the noble toleration which you have personally shown me notwithstanding what you must think seriously erroneous views of mine, and upon which I do not keep silence. This more than courtesy on your part has been to me a matter of greater pride and reward than any I expected in this life.

"5. I have always taught self-help and self-reliance with the force of a passion. I always lived within my means. When I had none, I never had a debt. I have never appeared among those who sought anything for themselves, and unless blindness comes again, or decay finds me helpless, I should invalidate what I have taught by accepting public aid ; and I have perfect happiness in not doing it. I maintain always and everywhere that the people should keep the State, not the State the people.

"Always yours sincerely,

"G. J. HOLYOAKE."

At the next Cabinet meeting Gladstone read Holyoake's letter. He had "never received a like one before," he said. His reply runs :

"DEAR MR. HOLYOAKE,

"I thank you for your note of yesterday ; and I need not, perhaps, say more than that it heightens the respect and regard which I have felt for you ever since I have had the advantage of knowing you. I shall examine carefully Mr. Cooper's case. Though your letter of the 11th has last and specially impressed me, I must also thank you for your very kind letter of the 28th ult."

The correspondence continued at intervals until Gladstone's death. The Home Rule policy had Holyoake's warm support, and he wrote both to Morley and Gladstone to that effect. In 1888 he wrote to say that he agreed with Gladstone (against the Unitarians) in his statement, while reviewing *Robert Elsmere*, that "a Christ not divine is one other than the Christ on whom the souls of Christians have habitually fed." "Many thanks for your note," Gladstone answered. "I am sorry not to have seen you for a rather long time ; especially as my years are slipping fast away." Another letter from Gladstone in the same year seems to have reference to the Parnell Commission that was being appointed :

"I thank you for your letter. The matter was a delicate one, and I am sincerely glad to be acquitted by a spontaneous and dispassionate judgment such as yours."

The death of Bright led to some further correspondence in 1889. Of 1890 there is an interesting letter to him from Gladstone, of which the reference is not very clear :

"I thank you very much for your interesting note, but your letters are always interesting. I certainly adhere to the sentiment expressed 45 years ago, but it should have been more developed. That method may account for very simple forms of human character for those who are more like little children. And I ought to have been a little more reverent towards so great a man as John Wesley."

Later, sending Gladstone a copy of his *Co-operative Movement To-day*, Holyoake said :

"When you were in Brighton some heretic sent you a question which you took the trouble to answer. I remonstrated with all the tribe for their want of discernment. In the days of Professor F. D. Maurice and Canon Kingsley I never disputed with them, and do not do so with good priests. There is no need to make demands on the good, seeing that there are always enough of the other sort extant."

A letter from Gladstone in the same year (1891) must have been occasioned by Holyoake's reminiscences, which were then appearing in the *Newcastle Chronicle*. While Gladstone was at Newcastle in 1862, he spoke on the American war, then raging, in a way that caused great surprise over the country. Holyoake, who reported him for one paper, condensed his words into the phrase : "Jefferson Davis had not only made a navy : he had made a nation." The feeling in Gladstone's mind at the time was that it was better that the Northern and Southern States should be separated, but his public explanation on the following night (that he "was no advocate either of slavery or the Southern States") was little heeded. It is to this incident that the following passage alludes :

"The mistake I made at Newcastle in 1862 was the greatest ever made by me in a speech. The opinion

was one entertained at the time by many persons friendly to the North ; but I, as a Minister, had no right to give utterance to it, and I marvel at my own stupidity in not seeing this explanation. I had quite forgotten the attempt at Middlesborough next day to retrieve the error, and I thank you for reminding me. But years after I gave a full public explanation in America, and received from Mr. Fish a letter which, as far as I was concerned, was very handsome, and all I could desire.

"It's long since we have conversed together ; and how much there is to converse about ! My life has been very long and very busy. I am thankful for the nature of the work that has been consigned to me. It has been not entirely, but almost entirely, emancipating work. I do not feel sure that the work of the next generation will be equally free from awkward adventures."

During 1893 they met several times at Brighton. Gladstone told him he had been solicited by the Spanish Government "to join in a federation against Anarchists." He was disinclined to do it, and Holyoake's remark that "you cannot legislate against insanity" confirmed him. Some talk about Bishop Stanley led Gladstone to write Holyoake afterwards :

"I think Bishop Bathurst left him the worst-conditioned diocese in England, and, unless I am much mistaken, he had not strength to administer the smallest or the best. . . . It will take a very long time to bring round the Church of England in that diocese. It is so much easier in this mysterious world to do evil effectively than good."

"Your distinction is just," Holyoake replied. "Bishops in some respects resemble men of whom Guizot spoke, who *desire* good strongly, but *will* feebly." They had spoken also of the Newmans, and Gladstone, who had for some time been out of touch with Francis, asked Holyoake to send him "an assurance of respect." "His



powers of mind may be said to amount to genius," he said. Holyoake discovered that each had assumed the other to be offended, and he restored good feeling between them.<sup>1</sup> To Gladstone he gave a copy of Newman's *Select Hymns*, and presently heard from him :

"Lord Acton came down here on Monday evening, and would have been very glad to meet you, but was unfortunately obliged to return to London on business yesterday at too early an hour to allow of my making an appointment.

"I have been reading Mr. F. Newman's hymns with great interest and sympathy. I have never known or heard of an instance in which that spirit of devotion, and that . . . closeness of relation between God and the human soul, which we are accustomed to regard as the first fruit of the Christian system is [placed] upon a basis of pure theism, with a [rejection] of every Christian topic. Whatever is the cause or the process, I rejoice unfeignedly in the fact. As I grow older and older the problems and [difficulties] of life thicken around me, but I anticipate [satisfactory] solutions for them all. I hope that in this writing I am not presumptuous or offensive toward you ; it would give me, if I knew it, the greatest pain.

"Believe me, with much respect,  
"Faithfully yours" <sup>2</sup>

Holyoake replied that, "so far from regarding the earnest statement of another's convictions as a reflection upon his own, he valued it both as information and service." "Of public affairs," he added, "I will only say that I never expected to see in England such a splendid government of progress as we have under your

<sup>1</sup> Holyoake gives Newman's letter on the matter in *Bygones* (I, 199). It is dated 1890, but this seems to be an error. Gladstone's letters are dated 1893.

<sup>2</sup> I copy from an imperfect copy. The words in brackets I suggest as filling the puzzled copyist's blanks

initiative." In the following year, when Gladstone reviewed Mrs. Besant's *Through Storm to Peace* in the *Nineteenth Century*, Holyoake wrote that nothing had yet been said of her "so comprehensive, so clear, so true." He suggested that the title should have been "From Peace to Storm"; though his explanation indicates that he meant "From Storm to Storm."

The last letters (in 1897) refer to a work, *The Origin and Nature of Secularism*, that Holyoake published in 1896. He had long been accustomed to send his works to Gladstone, but hesitated to send this popular restatement of his views on religion. Then it occurred to him that even Gladstone might misinterpret the liberal references he had made to religious persons and ideas in their correspondence, and he determined to show that his Agnostic position was wholly unchanged.

"It was alike considerate in you," Gladstone replied, "to withhold your book for a time, and kind eventually to send it.

"I read it agreeing with many things, reserving others, and hardly jarred until I got through nearly 100 pages. Of course, I do not attempt comment in detail over so wide a field. It seems to me unjust to say that Christ had a slave-spirit. To me the apostolic injunctions of non-resistance appear most wise, addressed as they are to individuals. The submission of communities or nations soon becomes degradation. I have no claim to the credit you give me. Much aid comes to me (1) from considering the real difficulties of belief, (2) from observing the superiority to myself—and sometimes to others besides myself—in moral tone in persons holding (what I think) inferior beliefs.

"To me the entire Christian scheme is inflexibly and intensely ethical. As a note of this belief I enclose a paper on the Atonement<sup>1</sup> which you may or may not

<sup>1</sup> Article in the *Nineteenth Century* for September 1894.

find time some day or year to look at. It seems to me that Secularism owes all its materials to Christianity, which it represents by amputation, and never would have existed without the Gospel. Why did not the Greeks, the most wonderfully intellectual people that ever existed, discover it? I see in this world of human beings, which has for result the creation of beautiful and noble characters, the jewels of creation. Secularism seems to me to require that at a given moment I should surrender them to the cold embrace of extinction—and this I am not willing to do—or, at the least, that I should forbear to make use of the [beautiful] scheme which, without solving, yet mitigates all difficulties, and no small part of the evidence which I find in the experience of my long life and of God's dealings with me in every part of it. Indulge me in these stray remarks with your usual charity. If I get at any time to Brighton, I shall hope to hear from you. I thank you much for your kindness."

In some respects this is one of the most remarkable letters that Gladstone ever wrote. The large recognition of non-Christian character, the pained perception of the difficulties that the advance of culture is bringing, and that his strength is no longer able to confront, the pleading tone of the letter, are unfamiliar to the reader of Gladstone. It sounds like the faint dying of the most resonant voice that was raised in behalf of theology in the nineteenth century. It was not a letter to modify Holyoake's views, and he replied :

"MY DEAR MR. GLADSTONE,

"I should have withheld my book altogether had I not finally thought it might come in your way and seem uncandid on my part not to have sent it to you. Always so fair yet firm towards dissentient opinion, I am influenced by your letters, which give me a higher sense of that art of statement which inspires the mind with respect when it may not concede.

"Never more could I say Christ had a slave-spirit, if with the injunction of non-resistance he had made known the limitation you indicate. When the Bible had ceased to be in my eyes what it once was, I continued to read it to my mother, and sent her one of large type that she might read it herself when her eyes grew dim. I respected the consolation congenial to her conscience. A poor old woman, a neighbour at Harrow, was advised by a missionary to read her Bible. But she had no means of buying spectacles. I bought her a pair. I am for every one being faithful to his faith.

"Secularism was primarily designed for ethical inspiration where theology is inoperative. I hope there is a future life, and if so my not being sure of it will not prevent it coming to me. I know of no better way of deserving it than by conscious service of humanity. Belief in a Personal Providence is a great advantage. All conviction is strength. But one can give no offence to a God of Truth by not saying he knows what he does not know. The universe never impressed me with so much awe and wonder as when I found I could not account for it. I admit ignorance is a privation. But to submit not to know, where knowledge is withheld, seems but one of the sacrifices that reverence for truth imposes upon us.

"I write in explanation, not in controversy, and beg you to forgive so many words."

Towards the close of the year Holyoake sent him *Sixty Years*. "My means of reading are now much narrowed from a variety of causes," Gladstone said, in acknowledging it, "but I could not resist opening your volumes." He proposed to visit Holyoake at Brighton, when next he was that way. Curiously, the one point on which he joined issue with Holyoake was in regard to his "eulogium on the series of bishops in Norwich." We saw what Gladstone thought of Bishop Bathurst. "I expect much from the new bishop—a Home Ruler,"

he concluded. In April, when his last illness was on, Holyoake sent a brief message. Miss Gladstone replied that her father "was much touched and pleased," and she gave him some account of his hopeless condition. In less than two months the fire had died down. A Congress of the Labour Association was held shortly afterwards, and Holyoake induced it to send a message of condolence to Mrs. Gladstone—the only message of the kind, he says, that was sent by any public meeting.

Holyoake's correspondence with the second great actor on the political stage, Mr. Chamberlain, has not the same intrinsic interest. Gladstone's letters show some approach to intimacy in his later years: from Chamberlain, with whom he was very friendly in the seventies, Holyoake was separated by a deep political antipathy after 1886. Perplexed as Holyoake was on Irish affairs between 1880 and 1886, he at once and cordially embraced Gladstone's theory of the remedy. It must be admitted that in this case his political partisanship led him into injustice. In later years, when Chamberlain had added the heresy of Protection—a heresy of still more grievous a character, as Holyoake conceived it—his dislike of his early friend was extreme. Forgetting that Chamberlain had never held and deserted any scheme of separate Parliament, and that he advocated the same measure of self-government for Ireland after the schism as he seems to have been prepared to advocate before it, Holyoake spoke of him as "the quick-change variety artist of the political stage." In this case he has failed to give us in his volumes of reminiscences the shrewd and just analysis of the characters he knew, which so generally delights his reader. However, the earlier correspondence with Chamberlain is not without interest.

In 1874 Holyoake wrote an article in the *Contemporary*

("Gambling in Politics") on the fall of Gladstone's Government. In it he vehemently attacked the Radicals for pressing their grievances so far as to ruin a progressive Ministry. Chamberlain wrote to him :

"I have only just found time to read your article in the *Contemporary* of March. On the whole I agree with its conclusions, while I very much admire the force and skill with which they are put.

"It seems to me, however, that you hardly do justice to the discontented Radicals. For myself I admire immensely Mr. Gladstone's personal sincerity and earnestness ; yet I hold that the last few years of his Ministry were almost unmixed loss to Radicalism. The opposition, or unwillingness to help, of one who professes so much sympathy is more dangerous to a cause than the antagonism of an open and armed foe. Had Lord — brought in Forster's Bill, he would probably have failed to carry it, or, if carried, it would speedily have been repealed. When Disraeli scorns the Non-conformists he does no harm to the Liberal cause ; while Gladstone's reply to Miall threw us back ten years.

"As a mere question of policy, too, I hold that Gladstone's qualified adhesion to Radicalism had the evil result of combining and stimulating against us every hostile prejudice and feeling, while it gave us no active assistance in compensation. Thus the 'flesh and blood' argument lashed the Whigs and many employers of labour into fury, while the neglect to legislate against the Law of Conspiracy and Criminal Law Amendment Act left the working classes without the practical results which should have followed from the expression of sympathy.

"You have correctly expressed the views of Non-conformists on the subject of Forster's Bill, but you have taken no note of the objections of Radical Educationists, like myself, who care nothing about the sectarian quarrel, except so far as its continued agitation

renders all progress, in the shape of a national system, impossible. I mention this though I feel, of course, that your space did not permit a full examination of the causes of our discontent."

The attitude towards Gladstone is clear and interesting. The education-question continued to agitate Birmingham, and Holyoake was, we saw, a lecturer for the Birmingham League. In 1876 Chamberlain wrote him that they thought of dissolving the League.

"The Bill of the Government," he said, "if properly carried out, will really do a great deal for *education*, but it is a tremendous blow to the Dissenters and the Secular party. But this is an issue which the League was not formed to try, and it is questionable whether it must not leave the battle to others. We shall have a kind of universal compulsion and universal education, and there remain only two things—(1) Free schools, for which the country is certainly not yet prepared; (2) To wrest this education out of the hands of priests of all shades. The last is really a branch of the Disestablishment movement, to which I am more and more convinced the efforts of all Radicals should now be directed."

Later in the same year he writes :

"You seem to have admirably succeeded in your new rules [of Secularism], although I doubt whether the interpretation put upon the word Secular by ordinary people will ever be changed. I think something may be done with my suggestion for licensing reform. The great difficulty in connection with the matter is the question of cost and compensation."

In 1880 Chamberlain, to the dismay of Whigs, took a place in the Ministry (as President of the Board of Trade), and Holyoake bespoke his interest for the abolition of the travelling tax. There can be little doubt that Holyoake's friendly relations with so many

members of the 1880 Government won particular attention to the Committee's claim. Holyoake wrote also to deprecate some attack that Lloyd Jones had made on Chamberlain, and he replied :

"Many thanks for your note. I have not seen Mr. Lloyd Jones's article, but, whatever he may say, I am glad at least to be assured of your kind remembrance and continued good will. I think the northern Co-operators make a mistake in attempting to identify themselves in any way with joint-stock companies, which are not co-operative at all in the true sense, but simply great trading speculations."

Holyoake dined with him at Highbury shortly afterwards, with Mr. Morley and Thomas Martineau. He seems to have startled them (especially Morley) by saying that "Cobden had introduced more immorality into politics than any other man of the time." He meant that Cobden introduced, or gave to it the attractiveness of success, the policy of pressing a single political purpose to the extent of over-riding other just reforms. It is a delicate problem in political morality, if there is such a science. Holyoake at times felt inclined to think himself the only cultivator of it. He wrote to Chamberlain a week or two later (apropos of Irish violence):

"A government which will not concede anything unjust to threats, nor hesitate to grant what is right notwithstanding hostility and menace, has the perfection of courage and justice. Your brilliant speech on Tuesday indicated all this, and the country is your debtor for it, and no less admired the next day's oration. I have never known so young a member of the Government discern so perfectly what to say and what not to say, and say it so well."



Chamberlain may have perused the letter with some comfort after 1886. When Holyoake presented himself at Leicester in 1884, he wrote :

“Whatever happens at Leicester, I shall always feel the greatest respect for your consistency, courage, and integrity.”

They met in the London demonstrations against the House of Lords in the summer, and Chamberlain wrote (in October) :

“The times, as you say, are lively, and, I hope, good. The next few months will decide whether we make the greatest advance which has yet been effected towards self-government, or whether we fall back into the condition of a Peer-ridden people.”

A year later he sent a comment on the Brighton situation :

“The Liberals of Brighton seem to be rather timid, and allow Mr. Marriott’s brazen impudence to frighten them. I should hope that Mr. Brett’s telegram will finally dispel any doubt as to Mr. Marriott’s mendacity.”

A few months later the Liberal vessel struck the rock of Home Rule, and only a few formal notes passed between them after the separation. Mr. Chamberlain subscribed liberally to the purchase of an annuity for Holyoake in 1889, observing that he had “a great respect” for him. But Holyoake had a tincture of bitterness at seeing the brilliant Radical transfer his ability and energy to the other side of the House, and when he committed the further offence of opening the campaign on tariff reform his dislike intensified.

In the same proportion his admiration of Mr. Morley increased after 1886. He wrote to him in 1887 :

"An observer of the actors who pass over the stage is permitted to applaud, though he himself could not perform there. There is no presumption in being delighted, as one cannot help being, at the ascendancy which your generous inspiration of Irish policy has given you. Yours will be the most memorable of Irish secretaryships. . . . For 700 years we have had Union without Unity with Ireland. Gladstone will give us Unity and Union. Let the Irish members go and build up a nation, and then they will re-enter our Parliament as our equals. There can be no unity save among equals."

Holyoake tried to defend his old friend Cowen, whom Liberals now depicted darkly, but Morley wrote of him :

"I don't at all agree with what you say about Cowen. He does his best every day in his paper to make Home Rule difficult, and those who are promoting it odious. I cannot imagine a more contemptible exhibition."

Two other letters of a later date (1898) may be quoted :

"DEAR MR. MORLEY,

"Once suggestions might be made to you—now the nation receives suggestions from you, and admiration is its thanks. In your speech at the Edwards Settlement (which, had not fate kept me in Manchester, I had heard) you spoke of 'soulless secularism.' I have been asked whether you applied it to that form of secularism for which I am responsible. If you did, it would make no difference in our friendship—for contrariety of opinion is the right of Free Thought. I send you the American edition of my book that you may the better judge."

The reply came at once :

"DEAR MR. HOLYOAKE,

"I am the very last man in all the world to suppose that Secularism must be soulless. What I meant was a soulless species of *Secularity*. As for imputing that to *you*, whose courage and elevation and

singleness of mind I have admired all my life—nothing could be further from my thought. Many thanks for the book all the same.

“Yours sincerely,  
“JOHN MORLEY.”

I may bring this chapter of epistles to a close with one or two from friends who belonged more fully to the world of culture. Of literary men and women I have quoted many letters as we proceeded, and will turn now to the scientific world. Professor Bain was a warm friend of Holyoake's, and had much correspondence with him; though the letters are rarely more than allusions to past or pending conversations. He knew Huxley well, but I find few letters from him. Herbert Spencer was one of his earliest friends, and often dined with him at the Whittington Club in the fifties, or shared the unceremonious tea at the *Leader* offices. In later years, when both lived at Brighton, they were frequent companions. Readers of *Bygones* will recall a strange passage in which Holyoake relates that, discovering that Spencer was going to America in 1882, he proposed to travel with him, and Spencer declined. Spencer's letter will be read with interest:

“DEAR MR. HOLYOAKE,

“The letter you named, though addressed to 34, Queen's Gardens [instead of 38], reached me. I postponed replying because of a difficulty I felt about the question you put.

“Many experiences show me how, with the utter unscrupulousness shown by people in the reports they set going, it is desirable, whenever possible, to avoid giving them handles. As a recent experience I may name that three or four versions have appeared within the last six months of a rumour that I am about to be married. . . . More recently have come various statements as to my American tour, one of them that I am going to lecture

there, another that I am going to lecture because I am in financial difficulties. . . . My reason for giving you these illustrations is that you will understand better why I hesitated to respond to your request to arrange so that our voyage to the United States should be in the same vessel. Inevitably, if we were fellow-passengers, and had the daily intercourse that would naturally occur, the fact would be remarked and commented upon by American fellow-passengers, and reporters and interviewers would inevitably be informed of our intimacy, and some such statement as that we had come over together, possibly with some purpose, would become current. The religious world is especially unscrupulous in its endeavours to injure antagonists, and as it would be their policy to damage me as much as possible—and as there either survives over there, or will be easily revived, the idea formed of you in early days, so that you would be called by them ‘the notorious atheist Holyoake,’ or some such name, I think it very probable that the fact of our association would be used as a weapon against me. . . .”

Spencer must have been not a little astonished when he saw how Holyoake *was* received, especially by the clergy, who proved less timid than he. Holyoake knew Spencer well enough to understand that this meant no diminution of the personal regard Spencer always had for him, but his reply was gently corrective :

“Your solicitude to keep the views for which you are responsible distinct from any for which you are not responsible I consider just and useful to the public. Principles of lesser range and moment than those you have advocated I have seen the necessity of keeping apart in the public mind. In maintaining myself that human affairs can best be regulated by considerations purely human, I have had to make clear that the secular principle is quite distinct from the theological. . . . I do not remember that the term ‘notorious atheist’ was

ever applied to me. Certainly for 20 years I have not heard it. You may remember that so far back as the days of the *Leader* Mr. G. H. Lewes invented the term 'Suspensive Atheist' by which he described me. . . . Americans excel all men in drawing staid conclusions from eccentric premises, but they have never yet inferred complicity of opinion among passengers of a steam vessel or a railway train. . . ."

A few months later he found Spencer wooing sleep in a hotel near Niagara. We shall see their friendly relations at Brighton later.

I have several times referred to Tyndall's regard for him, and will close with one or two of his letters. Writing to him during the first meeting of the British Association, Tyndall says :

"Other men laboured, and we have entered into their labours. Men like yourself have borne the brunt of the battle, and, when intrepidity was a risk, did not shrink from the exhibition of it. I was right glad to be able to oblige you."

When Major Bell sent to Tyndall the circular asking subscriptions for the annuity in 1875, he replied :

"Permit me to say that I have received with genuine sorrow the intelligence it conveyed of Mr. Holyoake's failing health. And allow me also to thank you for giving me the opportunity of showing, even in the small way here open to me, my appreciation of the character of one upon whose life is stamped, with singular distinctness, the image and superscription of an honest man."

Acknowledging the receipt of Holyoake's *History of Co-operation* in 1879, he wrote again :

"I am very much obliged to you for your book. It is not so much with Wilful Thinkers that I sympathise as with those who conduct grave discussions, not only in an able, but in a high-minded, gentlemanly way."

## CHAPTER XXIV

### AMONGST THE CO-OPERATORS ABROAD

THERE are few respects in which England has stimulated intellectual and social advance on the Continent, but it may distinctly lay claim to have done so in regard to education and Co-operation. In spite of the fact that Rousseau, Froebel, and Pestalozzi framed their ideals at a time when education was slight and crude in England—in spite of the fact that the early Manchester educationists did but act on their inspiration—English elementary schools had a great influence on the development of elementary schools abroad. In particular, the schools of Prussia and of Piedmont, which have had so large a share in the making of Germany and Italy, acknowledged a great indebtedness to the remarkable model set up by Robert Owen at New Lanark. On the industrial side the debt is even more readily acknowledged. Co-operative enterprise on the Continent was chiefly due to English inspiration. The theories of Fourier and other collectivists led to many co-operative experiments, but the broad modern movement is due to a deliberate adoption of the English scheme.

For the majority of the continental Co-operators Holyoake was the central and most venerable figure of the Co-operative world, and in the course of the eighties he had much intercourse with them. Dutch, French, Italian, and German Co-operators and social

students applied to him incessantly for information, and asked articles from him for their journals. His name was a tradition in the advanced circles of France and Italy, where the idea of Co-operation was welcomed until the later German Socialism began to rival it. Mazzini and Saffi, Nadaud and Louis Blanc, and so many others, had discussed Rochdale and its significance with him at London in the forties, and had taken home with them, when the time came, the idea of "self-help by the people." Then a number of French translations—followed shortly by Dutch, German, Hungarian, and Italian translations—of his history of the Pioneers began to circulate on the Continent, and little stores sprang up in their path, as they had done in England. For news of the later and more mature development of the movement they naturally turned to its historian.

In 1885 Holyoake attended the first Congress of the Co-operative movement in France, and in 1886 he visited Congresses at Milan and Bologna. Though he was now in his seventieth year, he still travelled thousands of miles annually, giving lectures or attending Co-operative functions. Until near the end of his life he remained a member of the Board of the Co-operative journal, and attended its meetings in Manchester nearly every month; he retained also his seat on the Central Board, and used to run to London several times a week to attend committees of which he was member or chairman (Travelling Tax Committee, Rationalist Press, Democratic League, Labour Co-Partnership Association, etc.). His older colleagues, carefully nursing the precarious vitality that remained to them, and passing annually into the final rest, were concerned at his activity. Probably for one who, like Holyoake, remembered travelling in days when one had not the money even to pay for a ride in the open trucks of the

- ✓ third-class carriage, with the rain and snow beating mercilessly upon one during a ten hours' journey to the north, there was no hardship in travelling in the eighties and nineties. And after his last visit to America his younger daughter (Mrs. Holyoake-Marsh) usually accompanied him until the date of her marriage (1894). His elder daughter (Mrs. Prail) became a chronic invalid, and so is less prominent.

Unfortunately, Holyoake had not the gift of tongues, and his life had been too full of action to permit a laborious acquirement of them. French he knew slightly, and we saw his labours with Greek and Latin ; but his knowledge never reached a pitch of practical use. The Central Board had intended to send Mr. Neale and Mr. Acland to the Congress at Paris in 1885, but Mr. Acland had to enter upon a political campaign at the time, and Holyoake was invited to take his place. "De Boyve is anxious," Neale wrote to him, "that English Co-operation should have at least two *noted* representatives." They and Mr. Johnson (of Manchester) set out on July 23rd for Paris. All his travels on the Continent are described by Holyoake in the *Co-operative News* at the time, and they are not the least bright and entertaining of his descriptive articles. The trip to France in 1885 was interesting to him, because Mr. Neale arranged for them to visit Godin's industrial community at Guise. English social students were much occupied with this establishment at the time, and Holyoake was eager to see it. It seemed to be a reproduction of his old master's famous establishment at New Lanark, a partial realisation of the Socialist dreams of a "Home Colony." Bourneville or Port Sunlight will give the modern reader his nearest—though still a very remote—impression of the establishment.

Godin, the proprietor of a large ironworks at Guise,



had fallen under the influence of Fourier's ideas some thirty years before. Endeavouring to strike a just balance of the claims of the different economic agencies, he decided that 75 per cent. of the net profits should be divided between the wage of labour and of capital, and 25 per cent. should go in special rewards and incentives to ability. He himself took five per cent. on his capital, and drew a salary as the manager of the large foundry. Like Robert Owen, he proceeded to erect model homes for his workers out of the profit that, in his view, morally belonged to the workers. The Fourierist standard that he adopted coincided very much with that of the later Owenites. One vast pile of buildings was to lodge his 1500 workers and their dependents. A common kitchen and restaurant, a great central hall for entertainments, a common school for the children, and a common nursery for the babies of the working mothers, recalled the best features of the Queenwood community that Holyoake had visited forty years before.<sup>1</sup>

To those leaders of the Co-operative movement in England who were insisting upon the more generous treatment of the employees the Guise "*Familistère*" had a natural attraction. Godin himself met Holyoake and his companions at the station with a carriage and pair, and drove them to the works. His wife had translated Holyoake's Rochdale history into French, so that his name was familiar at Guise. The foundries excited Holyoake's admiration, as he recollected the Eagle Foundry of his youth, in the earlier days of mechanical invention ; but the domestic arrangements raised him to enthusiasm. The practical sagacity shown in the realisation of a scheme that had so often proved a failure greatly impressed him. Palatial buildings, as he calls them,

<sup>1</sup> But, although M. Godin died in 1887, the Guise establishment still flourishes, and retains its ideal features.

had been erected on the estate of 65 acres in a bend of the Loire. He knew well the houses of the iron-workers of Lancashire and Staffordshire : the rows of ugly brick boxes, with slate roofs, in a world of perpetual grayness, if not squalor, lit only with the flash of a heavy-odoured inn here and there. At Guise each worker had his two or three or four fine rooms in the "social palace," looking out in front over the spacious park and the fresh country, and looking within upon the great hall with its glass dome—a "crystal palace"—where ever-fresh entertainment was provided. "Emulation, Progress, Liberty," was the ubiquitous motto. There was no attempt to enforce teetotalism in the restaurant, no compulsion to deal at the co-operative store, no religious instruction in the fine school. Babies spent their days in ideal surroundings, under good nurses ; as they grew older, every effort was made to render life healthy and happy for them. There seemed to be an appreciation of the saying of Owen, which Holyoake had always admired, that little children are our guests when they come upon our planet. Strolling into Guise one day, Holyoake noticed a shop that bore the motto : "Pour les Pauvres Diables." He was not surprised to find it empty, he said.

From the fascination of Guise he passed to Paris for the opening of the Congress. De Boyve was president, but Holyoake and Neale were designated "presidents of honour," and sat by his side. As this was the first Congress of French Co-operators, the oratory had fire in it. Holyoake pleasantly explained that his notice to come had been so brief that he had only half-an-hour in which to study their language, and so his command of it was imperfect. It is interesting to read his description of meetings at which he can have understood extremely little of what was said. French speakers, and even French audiences, speak so much by gesture that his

description is fairly ample. He found, also, many friends who spoke English. Nadaud, whom he had known as a refugee at London, was there; and his friend Wilfrid de Fonvielle assisted him. Neale was, in all his voyages, a most useful and generous companion. De Fonvielle took him to the French Home Office to see M. Barbaret (Minister of the Interior), who was encouraging Co-operation and afterwards corresponded with Holyoake. He thought it better that M. Barbaret should see Neale, who, of course, spoke French fluently, and telephoned for him. Neale did not come, and when Holyoake returned to his hotel he found his telephonic message on his own table. It had been converted into an instruction to "M. Pogniot" to "tell M. Neale" to come to the Home Office. How he parted from Neale in the dark at Dieppe, and spent a night in a curious hotel, and a day or two with Ulric de Fonvielle, before he recrossed, is pleasantly told in the *Co-operative News*.

The letters in which he described his visit to France led incidentally to an attempt to reconcile his friend W. Morrison to the Co-operative Movement. Morrison had been deeply offended that the Congress in 1880 had attempted to clear the character of a man whom he knew, and all subsequently recognised, to be worthless. He had done so much—he speaks of having spent £50,000—for Co-operation in its earlier stages that the apparent slight of himself made him morose and hostile. "I still think," he says, "that Co-operation is by far the best lever for raising the social position of the masses ever yet devised, so I hope it will prosper, though I shall no longer be in its ranks." Holyoake sent the long letter, which a copy of his Paris articles had elicited, to Crabtree and Greenwood, but little came of it. Mr. Crabtree wrote an admirable letter, referring to Morrison as "one of the best and most disinterested advocates we ever

had," but Greenwood's letter made matters worse. Morrison remained outside the movement. Of Holyoake he said: "It is by no means the first time in your life that you have stood nearly alone in maintaining your opinion on a matter of principle," and he maintained a very cordial correspondence with him to the end. But his letters reflect an embittered mind, and are not pleasant reading.

In 1886 Holyoake and Neale crossed the Channel once more on a Co-operative mission. Early in September Holyoake received a pleasant invitation to Milan:

"HONOURABLE SIGNOR HOLYOAKE,

"In Milan assembles for the first time a Congress of the Italian Co-operators, to communicate to each other their ideas, to instruct themselves by mutual experience, and to take counsel together as to the best way to follow in order to attain the end. In this labour of concord among social interests you are a master having authority; and, moreover, a master in the country where you were born, which boasts of the initiation of the Rochdale Pioneers.

"The Italian Co-operators desire ardently your presence, because you will be for them an affectionate and fraternal guide; and because it is useful and good that all who believe in the future of justice for the great human family should bind themselves in a pact of concord and reciprocal aid. We trust that you will not disregard the appeal of the Italian Co-operators, and in this hope, full of gratitude, we await your arrival."

Holyoake turned eagerly to the prospect of visiting the land in which he had taken so deep an interest for thirty years. But the long journey, the uncertain weather of October, and his entire ignorance of the language were serious obstacles, and he regretfully declined. A second and more pressing invitation came. "We want

your presence at any price," the Milanese Co-operators said ; and about the middle of October Neale and he set out as delegates from the Co-operative Union. The long journey through six nations—"English rain, French mist, Belgian fog, German haze, Swiss moonlight, and Italian sunshine"—passed pleasantly until they reached Italy. Neale amused him by his endless resources and usefulness, and after a time Holyoake wrote out, and stuck on the window, the announcement: "Dismembered Bradshaws taken in : Pocket books neatly repaired : Purses attended to." They slept at Basle, and set off the next day for Monza, where they were to visit Professor Vigano. At Monza Neale left the train, and Holyoake was slowly following, when the guard told him to go to the other side, and before he could do so the train was off. Presently the guard came to collect tickets, and demand a subsidy on Holyoake's ticket to Monza. Unfortunately, Neale had borrowed his "Italian phrase-book" just before he left the train, and Holyoake could do nothing but mutter "Neale, Vigano, Monza." The other passengers entered into the difference, and Holyoake's language was so intelligibly emphatic that the guard soon retired. When the train next stopped, at some large station, the Babel was renewed. At last Holyoake got a copy of the *Secolo*, and exhibited to the crowd the announcement of the Co-operative Congress. Many then knew him as the "delegato Inglese," and one man—it proved to be one of those who had signed the invitation to him—underlined the name of Holyoake in the paper. They at length found a soldier who spoke English, and who was arranging to send Holyoake back to Monza, when it occurred to him to ask where he was. He was in Milan, and decided to stay there. They had some time to wait for a 'bus, and the crowd gathered about in admiration while the phlegmatic Englishman

produced a copy of the *Daily News* and a cigar, and sat on the piazza-steps to read, until the 'bus came.

Co-operation had made much progress in Italy during the seventies. Apart from the impulse from England and the "Pionieri di Rochdale," the German idea of People's Banks had been adopted in 1865, and had greatly spread the co-operative idea. As the refugees from England returned in the wake of the conquering Piedmontese, and a more alert attention to social questions grew in the country, stores and productive societies multiplied. At the first Congress in 1886 there were delegates from 248 societies, which had a total membership of 74,000. They met in the hall of the Co-operative Builders at Milan, and Holyoake was much moved to find himself gazing on so pleasant a symptom of a regenerated and united Italy. His speech was translated for the audience, and when he told them of his relations with Mazzini, Saffi, and Garibaldi, and recalled the long struggle for unity, he was greeted with great enthusiasm. He wrote another short and spirited speech for the banquet that closed the Congress. "Now you have a united Italy—strive to have a united industry," he happily observed. The delegates belonged much more largely to the professional class than one found at English Congresses. He spent some hours with Manzoni's grandson, and was afterwards taken to his home, on the hills above Milan, by Professor Vigano. The fresh scenery—the vineyards and olive-groves leading down to the Lombard plains below and to the snow-covered peaks of the lower Alps above—and the deep joy of feeling himself in the most enlightened centre of Garibaldi's country, made his journey a happy and memorable one. He returned by Genoa, the Riviera, and Marseilles, so that he might visit Nimes, where he was entertained by De Boyve, the great French Co-operator.

A few months after his return from the honours of Italy and France, in the spring of 1887, he received the following letter from Neale :

“MY DEAR MR. HOLYOAKE,

“I have the pleasure of communicating to you an announcement which, I think, will give you gratification—namely, that the Northern Section, in the exercise of a power given to it by the United Board to select the gentleman who should be invited to deliver the inaugural address at the Carlisle Congress, in the place of Lord Rosebery and the Archbishop of York, whom our Carlisle friends were anxious to get as President if possible, declining, have unanimously selected you, and invite you by me to preside on the first day, and deliver the address accordingly.”

The honour was a rare one for a working Co-operator. An eminent and sympathetic outsider—a peer, a bishop, or a professor—was usually invited to inaugurate the Congress. So far Mr. Hughes was the only active Co-operator who had presided, and, in view of the recent emphatic development of the difference in regard to profit-sharing, Holyoake appreciated the compliment.<sup>1</sup> The exertion would be severe for a man of seventy years, but he had his speech printed and delivered in advance to the delegates. It transpired that this was unnecessary, as his excellent elocution enabled him to be heard distinctly in all parts of the theatre.

His speech was admitted to be both judicious and eloquent, a combination of features that was not very easy in the circumstances. The controversy between the

<sup>1</sup> Neale presided in the following year. But I gather that he had been pressed to do so earlier, as he writes: “For myself, I want to hold back till the time comes when I propose to retire, and can sing the song of the dying swan; if I may venture to assume a likeness to that more dignified web-foot, rather than to our domestic water-fowl.” His letters to Holyoake after 1880 are always pleasant, and agreeably reflect his gentle, tactful, and upright personality.

two schools of Co-operators was then at its height, as we shall see, and the opportunity to make a fervent appeal to so large a gathering in the interest of the idealist group was tempting. He did not indeed neglect to plead for his ideal of co-partnership of employees, but he did not dwell on it unduly, or in the phrases that his colleagues used in the later sectional meetings. His chief object was to mark the contrast, as he so well could, between the condition of labour earlier in the century and later. From the grim and pitiful struggles of the workers during his youth he turned to the new power they possessed in Co-operation—to their huge warehouses, their banks with transactions of £16,000,000 a year, their great factories, their 1,200 stores and 800,000 members, their vast organisation spreading over the whole kingdom. In an eloquent peroration he recalled the early workers, Christian Socialist, Owenite, and Pioneers, whose labours and sacrifices had laid the foundations of their imposing structure.

He was followed with the deepest attention, and when the proposer of the vote of thanks (B. Jones, a strong opponent of his views) had said that they "could not have a better President for their Jubilee Year," and the seconder had contended that it was "the best speech ever delivered to Congress," the audience rose to their feet and with great enthusiasm sang "He's a jolly good fellow." Sir Wilfrid Lawson, who was on the platform, and took the chair on the second day, made reference to the "incisive, brilliant, epigrammatic utterance of my friend Mr. Holyoake"; and when Neale succeeded to the chair in the following year he made frequent allusion to his predecessor's "brilliant address." One enthusiast wrote in the *Co-operative News* that the motto of Co-operators henceforward ought to be "God bless the Queen and Mr. Holyoake." It was assuredly a fine



achievement for a man in his eighth decade of life, and it evoked an expression of regard from the Co-operative body that had hardly a parallel. The printed address was equally applauded. "It is," Mr. Sam Timmins, a good judge, wrote to him, "worthy of the highest praise as a literary work. Why doesn't our press make more of such subjects and addresses? Any prattling fool who has M.P. after his name gets more newspaper notice, and a thousand times more readers, than the real leaders of the people and prophets of the future."

At all these Congresses of the Co-operative body the acute difference of feeling in regard to the treatment of employees was being discussed with some warmth, and Holyoake's correspondence turns largely on it. It will be better, however, to reserve these episodes until we come to deal with the Co-Partnership Association, in which Neale and Holyoake and the "idealists" at length embodied their scheme.

Later in the year 1887 Holyoake found himself once more amidst the enthusiasm of foreign Co-operators. Neale accompanied him as British representative, and his daughter Emilie represented the Women's Co-operative Guild. The Congress was held in a large circus at Tours. With his usual habit of characterising towns in a phrase, Holyoake said that Tours "must be the place to which Frenchmen go to acquire the sense of repose." At the final banquet he handed a little speech to Professor Gide, but the essential word in it overtaxed the Professor's resources. Holyoake—he appeared in the various papers as M. Allioth, M. Ollick, M. Holysake, etc.—had noticed that the republican motto was generously posted over the circus, and he suggested that it should be enlarged into "Liberty, Equality, Fraternity, and Competence." The Frenchman knew of no equivalent in his tongue that would express the sentiment

with the same neatness as in English. After leaving Tours, they paid a second visit to M. Godin at Guise. Holyoake had been writing for some time in the *Émancipation* (edited by De Boyve), and was much respected by French Co-operators. Later he wrote for the Unione Co-operativa of Milan, and advised them in the launching of their periodical. He also wrote for the Dutch Co-operators, and in the American *Lend a Hand*. Neale often played the friendly part of interpreter for him in his foreign correspondence, as he did always on their travels. At the beginning of 1888 he wrote :

"I enclose a letter in the German speech and handwriting, addressed to 'Herr G. J. Holyoake, Highwell-born,' which the writer has sent to me with a request that I would forward it to you : accompanying it, of my own act, by a translation into the English speech and writing. For, though the prejudice against French, as a *revolutionary* language, which you once told me prevailed in the High Tory circles where you were brought up, and prevented your learning that language, probably did not extend to German ; yet I incline to think that Mr. Hantschke's request will have a better chance of getting answered if it comes to you in English than it would have in its native dress."

The year 1888 was an industrious one in Co-operative affairs. Glancing through the diary of the active septuagenarian, I find that in January he was much occupied with the Brighton Equitable Society, of which he accepted the presidency, gave an address to the New Cross Society, and attended three meetings of the Travelling Tax Committee and one of the Central Board. In February he had the meeting of the Newspaper Board at Manchester and a lecture at Bolton, in addition to the current committees. In March he had a Central Board meeting at Manchester, and lectures at Leicester

and Kentish town: in April, lectures at Bedford and Yarmouth, and a meeting of the executive of the National Association for the Promotion of Technical Education: in May, lectures at Gorleston, Yarmouth, Beccles, and Brighton, and much speaking at the Dewsbury Congress. In a word, he delivered some forty lectures and addresses in the course of the year, attended nearly all the meetings of the Brighton Society, the Central Board, the Newspaper Board, the Travelling Tax Committee, the Technical Education Association, and the Co-Partnership Association, took an active part in the annual Congress at Dewsbury, and went once more as a delegate to Italy. When we add to this a large amount of journalistic work and attendance at some scores of meetings, dinners, and other functions, we have a fair picture of his movements during his later years. His diaries tell much the same story until 1903, with the exception of 1894, when he had a grave illness.

The visit to Bologna in October was his last association with foreign Co-operators. In the early part of the year Holyoake received a somewhat mystic communication from the headquarters of the Unione Co-operativa at Milan:

“VENERATED MASTER,

“I dare not ask you to come to our grand Congress on the 19th of October at Bologna, but in invoking your good wishes we shall combat academic Co-operation and the Socialists. But a line from you pointing out the way, and with your signature, would bring us luck. We venerate you as a master.”

Neale, who was puzzled to translate “Co-operation confessionnelle,” received a letter inviting the two of them to the Congress, as “the godfathers of our Federation.” Neale was then in his 78th year, and Holyoake

in his 71st; but they again faced the long journey, with Miss Holyoake as companion. They called at Paris on the way, to make arrangements for the pavilion of the English Co-operators at the impending Exhibition, and then passed through the Mont Cenis to Bologna. Professor Vigano presided at the Congress, and Count Saffi translated Holyoake's speech for the audience. One of the papers described it as "a brilliant speech that endowed political economy with poetry."

But the details of the third Italian Congress differ little from the earlier one at Milan. The visit was chiefly memorable from the number of old friends that Holyoake met. Count Aurelio Saffi—though, being still a republican, he preferred the simpler title of Professor Saffi—will be remembered as one of the Triumvirs of Mazzini's short-lived republic. He fled to England when it collapsed, and was initiated to Co-operative ideas there by Holyoake in the early fifties. He had married the sister of Mr. E. H. J. Craufurd (chairman of the Garibaldi Committee), and his wife and he invited the English visitors to their villa at Forli. From Forli they passed to Florence, and spent a day or two with Signor Nathan at Antella, a few miles out. Mrs. Nathan, the mother, was the lady he had taken to see Garibaldi at Mr. Seeley's house. Then he turned his steps towards the south, where nearly every town had for him some vivid memory of Mazzini or Garibaldi. He saw with quickened pulse the new Rome that was spreading out, under Victor Emmanuel, beyond the seven hills and the ruins of that older Rome which now gleamed through the soil of the Middle Ages. From Rome he passed to Lendinara, to visit another old friend of the days of struggle, Mme. Mario (Jessie Meriton White), whom he had not seen for thirty years. She had been one of the first to spread the English gospel of "self-help" in Italy, and he says that

he found her as bright as when she used to fan the flame of enthusiasm for Italy in the Fleet Street House. At Venice he visited Browning, and had coffee with Ruskin. At Milan he was met by Professor Vigano, and borne off once more to his home on Monte Vecchio. He concluded his rapid and pleasant journey with a slow ride through the St. Gothard and Switzerland, and reached Brighton within three weeks of his departure.

During the remaining years of his life he remained in very friendly touch with the Italian Co-operators. Each Christmas the Milanese Co-operators sent him a *panettone* for remembrance, and they corresponded frequently with him. And when, years after, his remains stood for the last time before his friends, they were wrapped in the flags that recalled the struggles of Italy, and that he had treasured in his library for several decades.

The accounts that he and others published in the *Co-operative News* of the spread of the movement abroad were not without influence on its fortunes in England. An abortive movement may, in peculiar national circumstances, have a remarkable growth for a time in a particular country. In proportion as an idea or an institution overleaps national frontiers, and adapts itself to life in very different social and economic conditions, it claims a more serious consideration. Holyoake's articles and writings attracted or increased the interest of many people of eminence in the movement. Lady Tennyson wrote him :

"I have read with great pleasure your very interesting account of your visit to Milan, and I thank you heartily for your kindness in thinking of me and sending it to me. He who sows is so often not the one who reaps on this earth of ours that I cannot but feel you are exceedingly happy in this rich harvest of your labours, and in the still richer promise of harvests to come. Co-operation

seems to me one of those grand simple applications of eternal truths to the every-day work of the world that, having been made, must extend indefinitely."

He asked the Poet Laureate to write the ode for the first Co-operative Festival at the Crystal Palace, and Lady Tennyson intimates that he would have done so but for serious illness.

"I hope," she says, "that we may not seem double-faced with regard to Co-operation, our names not appearing on the list of any store. It is not that we are not warm advocates for it, providing always that the corporate conscience is kept as truly after the divine image as any individual conscience, but that we feel our first thought must be for our near neighbours."

The Prince of Wales (the present King) also followed the movement with friendly attention, and Holyoake sent several of his works to Sandringham and Marlborough House. Sir Francis Knollys wrote him, in acknowledging his *Self-Help a Hundred Years Ago*:

"DEAR MR. HOLYOAKE,

"I have had much pleasure in laying before the Prince of Wales your letter of yesterday's date and the book which arrived with it. I am desired by His Royal Highness to express to you in reply his cordial thanks for having been so good as to send him a copy of your work."

About the same time the editor of *Chambers' Encyclopædia* begged him, "as the foremost living exponent of the principle of Co-operation," to revise the article he had received on the subject. And—to close with Co-operative matters for the time—Mr. Hodgson Pratt wrote him from Paris:

"A few days ago I was at Nimes, and after an address on the Co-operative Club movement I went off to the workmen's club having the good name of 'Solidarity.'

There we had a famous and fraternal confab. until a late hour of the night. During my visit to this pleasant city I was constantly asked for news of 'Holyoake,' and at the gathering in question proceedings terminated with a toast—'Holyoake and Neale,' all standing and clinking glasses of good red wine. . . . Last night I sat with the Central Board at Paris, and there also were numerous inquiries after 'Holyoake.'"

I have repeatedly suggested that the Co-operative cause in England was not running a smooth course during these years, but we may discuss that aspect of it in a later chapter. For the moment it will be well to turn to a bundle of correspondence that will bring our story up to the last decade of the nineteenth century. How many the permanent interests of Holyoake still were I have indicated above. Beyond these were a number of other interests—the sorrows of India and of Ireland, for instance—that often occupied his mind and his pen. His chief correspondent in India was the professor of law at the Calcutta University, Mr. K. M. Chatterjee, whom he had often met at London. The letters of Chatterjee contain only the familiar charges against British rule. He shows extreme resentment against Lord Dufferin. "His Excellency," he says, "actually taunted some foolish men, who had gone to make their homage to him, for having assumed the English dress, little knowing—and his ignorance was sinful—that those very men owed their success under British rule to their complete self-effacement." His long and bitter letters only saddened, without informing, his "dear grand old man," as he called Holyoake. Indian problems came too late in life to be mastered by him; and he was not one of those progressive Englishmen who seem instinctively to welcome the impeachment of their country.

More decisive was his attitude on Irish questions,

though here again he listened reluctantly to the heavy invectives of his friends against England. Mr. W. H. James and Mr. Morley were the correspondents whose letters were the most acceptable to him. "Yes," Mr. James wrote him in 1888, "a real 'Hibernia Pacificata' would be the zenith of triumphant statesmanship. . . . There is, unfortunately, always the House of Lords! It has been for centuries the fatal cause of half Ireland's troubles; and vulgarity and love of wealth and position have very deep roots in every stratum of English society. . . . I think the G.O.M. much aged: his attitude is the most pathetic that history records." Karl Blind wrote bitterly of the Irish as "the sworn enemies of intellectual and political progress." Mme. Venturi, on the other hand, whose zeal for Mazzini and Italy had simply changed into a zeal for Dillon (whom she calls "the most like Mazzini of any I ever met") and Ireland, urged him to act for Ireland. She gladly repeats to Holyoake a mayor of Dublin's description of the Liberal Unionists as "the mules of politics: with neither pride of ancestry nor hope of posterity"—really, a quotation from Lloyd Garrison—and insists: "You and Mr. Neale must not be *powers* without doing something for Ireland." Beyond attending a few meetings at Brighton in favour of Home Rule, Holyoake could do little. Later he saw much of Davitt (to whose *Labour World* he contributed) and Justin McCarthy, and his letters to them sufficiently indicate his feeling. To Davitt he wrote (December, 1890):

"Events show you knew more of Mr. Parnell than any one else. Nothing is more admirable in the real Nationalist party than your clear, decisive, angerless judgment. All the friends of Ireland have pride, more than hope—they have confidence in the issues. Regards to the invincible 'Tim.'"



To Justin McCarthy, a few days later, he wrote :

"Had fate arranged that we should have spoken at Rochdale together, I should have been the colleague of a real Irish Chief. It was a great triumph to be chosen, as you have been, with the consenting acclaim of three nations besides America. I congratulate you. Parnell does no more than Chamberlain did, and his revolt will do no more harm to Nationalism than Unionism has done to Liberalism. We trust Gladstone in England, and shall trust you in Ireland."

Holyoake was probably held apart from Irish agitation as much by his Secularism as by his age. Curiously enough, a rumour found its way into print in 1890 that he had become a Catholic. A Dewsbury paper announced : "From a statement made and published by Mr. Holyoake, it appears that he has embraced the Roman Catholic faith." The origin of the rumour seems to have been a paragraph that he wrote in the *Present Day* in 1886. He had then discovered amongst the old papers that he was arranging for autobiographical purposes a document that showed he was an Orangeman ! The facts he could not recall, but there was the ticket telling of his admission to an Orange Lodge in 1866. The discovery led him to tell another story. Once, when he was visiting his friend Thomas Scott at Ramsgate, he was taken to see Mrs. Pugin and the Catholic chapel and institutions connected with Mr. Pugin's house. To the industrial school, as such, he gave a small donation. Major Bicknell seems to have regarded him as in a by no means desperate condition, and asked him if he would mind prayers being said for him in the Catholic Church. In the sequel some Catholic admirers subscribed £15, and he was told that for this sum 10,000 masses would be said for his conversion.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> He must have been told that he would have a share in 10,000 masses. The fee for a mass is half-a-crown.

The story must have gathered substance as it went, until his friends were startled by the categorical announcement of his conversion.

In 1887 his picturesque friend "De Rohan" made his last melodramatic appearance. Holyoake had met him in America in 1879, carrying out some adventurous work in connection with emigration. Now he wrote from Havre that he was bedridden with paralysis and "dying absolutely of want." He proposed an appeal for himself in the *Times*, but Holyoake thought it more profitable to send his letter to a few old friends, like Mr. Craufurd, and gather a few guineas for him. To these he added five pounds himself, and sent the sum to Havre. A few weeks later he received a final letter:

"MY DEAR FRIEND,

"Just able to scrawl Good-bye, God bless you and yours. Defend my memory—'Inveni portum; spes et fortuna, valet: sat me lusistis, ludite nunc alios.' My answer to all who may judge me hastily is that I have done the best I could with the faculties given me in the circumstances wherein I have found myself placed during an eventful and hard-working life of sixty-seven years. Who could do more? Many thanks to you, dear Holyoake, for practical friendship shown. May we meet in death."

He prudently added in postscript: "Answer by a line to say if it reaches you." "Poor fellow," said Craufurd, "melodramatic to the end . . . but his writing is surely not that of a moribund." A chapter might be written on the characters Holyoake knew who ended in too close an acquaintance with the revolver. We have seen several cases of suicides bequeathing their slender property to him. Twice he was entreated by murderers, who had known him, to help them. One of them, Stephen Forward, coolly wrote him from jail: "With

help I may be enabled to assist in obtaining respect for that class of opinion we mutually hold." Him Holyoake quickly repudiated ; but a few years later he did appeal, with advantage, for a young Irish journalist, Gerald Supple, who had only escaped the crime of murder by shooting the wrong man. At another time he was often visited at his shop, and pressed to visit at her house, by a "handsome, voluptuous woman, with great dramatic talent," who turned out to be the mistress of Wainwright, brother and accomplice of the Whitechapel murderer of 1875.

## CHAPTER XXV

### EASTERN LODGE

IN 1886 Holyoake settled in the comfortable little house at Brighton (Eastern Lodge) where his surviving friends used to visit him amidst the curious relics of his eventful career. The house at Sudbury was given up after his wife's death in 1884, and, after a period in chambers at Essex Street, he moved to South Kensington. In 1886 he married again, and took the house at Brighton. He had, we saw, been familiar with Brighton for many years, and was well known to Liberal workers there. From the beginning of 1887 he took a very active part in its affairs. His pleasant features, ennobled rather than scarred by the honourable frays of five decades of agitation, were usually to be seen on the platform, or in the council-room, or at the festive table, of its various progressive associations. He was assiduous in the councils of the new Co-operative Society and the reorganised Liberal and Radical Society, presided occasionally at friendly gatherings of workers, and was interested in the Monday Lecture Society. In a few years he came to found a "Civic Centre," at which the different—and often antagonistic—groups he met might mingle in social brotherhood.

A letter to him from Sir Robert Peel, who contested Brighton in 1889, will suffice to show that his political work was appreciated :

"I really feel most grateful for your ever-present countenance and support, and for the warm-hearted

sympathy you have shown to me during this arduous contest. To increase the Liberal vote by just 2,000 is very satisfactory and encouraging with a view to future elections. I believe there is no doubt whatever that monetary considerations influenced a large section of the electorate, and cases have been submitted indicating bribery and corruption. However, under very difficult circumstances I have done my best, and I warmly appreciate the kindness I have met with at your hands."

It was a point of pride with Holyoake to attempt to unseat Sir W. Marriott, whom he had unluckily passed as a Liberal candidate, but both at that and the 1892 election Marriott was returned. With his Conservative colleague, Mr. Gerald Loder, Holyoake seems to have been on more friendly terms.

Though the far greater amount of the work that Holyoake was then doing was entirely unpaid, his friends knew that he had to add much lecturing and journalism to increase his very scanty income, and the proposal was made to buy a fresh annuity for him. Some £700 was subscribed; half the sum was vested in a forty-pound annuity, and the rest given to him. The sum, his friends candidly admitted, was disappointing; but the great majority of those who had worked by his side, and fully realised his services, had by that time passed from the stage. To the generation about him he was a picturesque survival of an age to which they only faintly grasped their indebtedness. For him there was cheering warmth in the way the subscription was taken up. Dr. Parker, T. Allsop (the son), W. Morrison, T. Burt, E. V. Neale, M. E. Marsden, and R. Applegarth (who worked laboriously for its success) formed the committee. Many Co-operative Societies joined the list, the Manchester Branch of the Wholesale sending a cheque for fifty pounds. The Victoria Dramatic Club (consisting of

employees of the Civil Service Supply Association) raised £150 by a performance of "Caste" at St. George's Hall. The *Co-operative News* stimulated its readers by publishing a poem, that deserves quotation for its feeling :

"TO GEORGE JACOB HOLYOAKE.

"When from this selfish, peddling, petty world,  
The ruffled soul turns, faint and sick, away ;  
Hope beaten down, the flag of faith refurled,  
Worn out with waiting for the brighter day—  
Then, grandly struggling through the murky air,  
Too dense and thick for feebler light to shine,  
To drive away the deadness of despair,  
Comes, full of help, a beacon flame like thine !

"Bold pioneer ! True spiritual king,  
Before whose holy and far-reaching aim  
The pomp of courts sinks to a common thing,  
And war-won honours veil themselves in shame !  
The good of man—the truth for its own sake—  
The cause of labour—thou hast made thine own !  
Warm friend of all thy race ! this tribute take  
From one to hero-worship little prone."

"To those whose names I here record," Holyoake wrote in his letter of thanks, "I shall owe the pleasure of lingering still in the field of combat, and often finding my way again to the front ; or, in days of peace, be able to cruise about the coast of life without any immediate necessity of putting into port. After seventy-two years of life a man becomes interested in it, and is pardonably curious to see how some of the speculations will turn out." In conversation he used to put it that he should feel ashamed of dying within a reasonable number of years after this purchase of an annuity by his friends.

The prominent action of Dr. Joseph Parker in connection with the subscription was much commented on. He wrote a letter to the press in eulogy of Holyoake—coupled with a characteristic assurance how little he feared the spread of his opinions.

"From my boyhood," he said, "I have been an admirer of Mr. Holyoake's style of writing and a thorough believer in Mr. Holyoake's personal sincerity—a sincerity which he has formed by many sacrifices of a kind which most severely try both the temper and the conscience of men. When I was twenty-three years of age I had the temerity to encounter Mr. Holyoake in public debate for three nights, and I gladly testify that not one unkind or bitter word was spoken by my gifted and eloquent opponent. . . ."

"Ministers have thanked me for my letter about the testimonial," he wrote to Holyoake, "the feeling being that in debate and conflict Holyoake is a gentleman. You would be pleased if you could know all I have heard." They corresponded frequently until Dr. Parker's death. When Holyoake dedicated a new edition of his *Public Speaking and Debate* to Parker, the great preacher pronounced it "an honour of the most acceptable sort"; a little later he insisted on sending Holyoake three pounds to be spent in assisting the circulation of it.

Dr. Parker had one point of contact with Holyoake, besides mutual respect, that few other eminent preachers shared. "My motto is," he wrote, "let the Secular State teach secular matters, and the Christian Church teach religion." But many other clergymen are found, as always, in the circle of Holyoake's correspondents. The American preachers, Dr. G. Lorimer and Dr. R. Collyer, wrote frequently and cordially. "The sight of ye is good for sair e'en," Dr. Collyer wrote after a visit to England. Of English clergymen, Mr. Hugh Price Hughes became a warm friend in 1890, and the connection had a sequel in 1894 that we must notice later. Mr. Sharman was still writing gay, unprofessional letters to him every few months from Preston.

"It was very kind of you," he writes in 1889, "to  
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send your *Universal Republic*, but O! why did you print the awful name on the outside of the wrapper? The postman fainted, and the police of all nations have taken alarm. For months I had led a quiet life, and now, thanks to your criminal folly, I am beset by spies. A blind beggar—an Irishman—keeps an eye on the front gate, an Italian grinds an organ while his monkey watches the back door, an agent of the Czar lodges next me on the left, and an Austrian lodges on the right.”<sup>1</sup>

Mr. Frome Wilkinson began to correspond with him after reading his *Sixty Years*. “Your experience,” he said, “has impressed upon me more terribly than ever how immeasurably greater are the sufferings Jesus Christ has borne at the hands of his adherents to those he has suffered from his enemies and non-adherents.” An Anerley clergyman, Mr. Halsey, had Holyoake to speak from his pulpit. With Mr. R. J. Campbell, of Brighton, and Canon Barnett, he had a good deal of friendly intercourse. “It will always be a source of gladness to me to remember,” Mr. Campbell wrote, “that it was you who nominated me for the National Liberal Club.” And there is a friendly note from the late Bishop of London.

<sup>1</sup> The *Universal Republic* was “an occasional magazine advocating the amity of nations,” to quote its sub-title, that Holyoake edited (and apparently wrote) in 1889. While it advocated the republican form, its main object was to promote social progress and international peace. Only one number seems to have been issued.

I find that I have, in an earlier chapter, overlooked an interesting correspondence with the Archbishop of Canterbury, and may notice it here. Mr. George Anderson called Holyoake's attention to the fact that several acres of open ground attached to Lambeth Palace were little used, and begged him to agitate that they be opened to the poor of the district. With the co-operation of the South Place congregation, he addressed a memorial to the Archbishop. “Attentive consideration” was promised, in a polite reply, but nothing was done for some years. Then Holyoake wrote to the press, and there was a renewed agitation (in 1883). Eventually (a few years ago) the London County Council acquired the fields.



In none of these letters from divines is there ever the least approach to an argumentative mood, nor is there any other than the frankest recognition of their fundamental divergence in regard to religion. No clerical correspondent ever assumes or suggests that Holyoake had a latent or a slowly-forming and as yet implicit, belief in the simplest creed. His qualities of character, his social services, and his gentlemanly conduct of such controversy as he waged, were the sole points of contact. I lay stress on the circumstance because less able and high-minded Freethinkers have at times misconstrued these friendly relations with so many clergymen. They reflect no little honour on all concerned. The *National Reformer* called them "significant"; they were significant in a sense that lay beyond the writer's range.

During the earlier years of his residence at Brighton he wrote the series of sketches which were afterwards reunited in the most entertaining of his works, *Sixty Years of an Agitator's Life*. Many friends, especially Mr. Knowles and Mr. Morley, were pressing him to publish his recollections. There was scarcely another writer living in England whose memory could light up so long and so stirring a period of English history, and his methodical and industrious habits had led him to preserve a vast quantity of documents. From house to house he had taken with him boxes of letters and papers that bore on the story of his life from his eighteenth year. He had in his successive journals often reproduced the more interesting documents, but when he came again to arrange his papers in 1886 he found himself surveying his career with new emotion. There was the thin bundle of yellow documents that recalled life in the foundry and the framing of young ambitions in the Mechanics' Institute and his father's attic fifty years before. There were the relics of the Owenite movement—the easy

flowing script of the great idealist, the precise business-like hand of Place, the sonorous periods of Southwell : all dead, the last of his colleagues, Lloyd Jones, passing away in 1886. Then there were the Chartist letters, the foreign-refugee letters, the minutes of the Garibaldi Legion Committee, the stormy records of early Secularism, Radicalism, Trade Unionism, and the dozen other movements he had worked in. Even of these conflicts of his middle age he was almost the sole survivor. As he wrote, the black-edged cards came in every month. Julian Harney still survived of the Chartist group, but he led a quiet and wholly tamed life at Richmond. Bright, the last of the great early Liberal group, died in 1889 ; and in the same year were announced the deaths of his brother Walter, of his early Secularist colleague, Percy Greg, of Tennyson, Browning, and others belonging to a generation later than his own. As he went on writing Bradlaugh and Craufurd passed away. It was a new world and a new generation that he contemplated from his windows at Eastern Lodge.

It was well that he was urged to write the story of his career, or, more correctly, an account of the men and movements he had known, while his mind was still strong and his pen firmly held. No biographer could have made those boxes of dusty documents tell the vivid story that his excellent memory and his racy pen could construct with their assistance. Of his share in the movements it has remained for the biographer to tell, as his own works are rather reminiscent of past scenes and fellow-actors than autobiographic ; but his chapters are like coloured lantern-views of the past beside the pale sketches the historian can laboriously delineate.

As is so often the case in his work, the chapters lack continuity and broad construction, but in this instance such features were distinctly advisable. His first thought

was merely to write a long series of journalistic articles, which he could do with the hand of a master. Cowen accepted them for the *Newcastle Chronicle*, and they began to appear in January 1890. The title, *Sixty Years of an Agitator's Life*, was suggested by Cowen. "Sixty years amid social and insurgent movements," was Holyoake's choice, but he saw at once that—probably for the only time in his journalistic career—his choice was improved upon. Cowen and his staff were assiduous, also, in watching his manuscript. The opportunities for libel were innumerable, and other matters fell under the censor. The interesting letters of W. S. Landor to Holyoake have been lost, and a chapter entitled "A Suspicious Priest," that one would like to read, has entirely disappeared since it was politely declined by Cowen. A chapter on a prize-fight, that would have delighted J. Cowen, senior, was rejected by the son, and the chapter (published afterwards) on "Murder as a Mode of Progress," was returned by the editor of the *Chronicle*.<sup>1</sup>

The publication of the work in two volumes had, of course, a large sequel of correspondence. Here and there it fell under the eyes of some old man, in whom it awoke deep recollections. From Birmingham one wrote to him who had watched the shooting-stars with him in his youth. Julian Harney resumed a pleasant correspondence from his retirement at Richmond. The manager of the Eagle Foundry at Birmingham sent him a selection of articles from his old works; one man, it seems, survived there from the time when Holyoake

<sup>1</sup> The acting editor was the Mr. Adams who had asked Holyoake to publish a pamphlet on tyrannicide in 1858. It is amusing to read, even in recent works, some implication that Holyoake rejected this pamphlet out of timidity, when we know that in 1890 Adams was rejecting Holyoake's own essay on tyrannicide! He pleasantly explained that Holyoake "put the case for tyrannicide too well."

worked in it. Another letter that came to him in 1889 has the passage : " When you and I used to meet, poor boys, in the streets of Birmingham, who would have thought I should be the chief actor in bringing into the community of nations young Australia ! " The writer was Sir Henry Parkes, another of the pupils of the Birmingham Mechanics' Institute who had won distinction. Holyoake met him in London in 1885, and they corresponded for some years. A letter to him from Sir Henry in 1886 runs :

" My life has been a rather changeful one since I last saw you, and things in this colony have not gone so well. Soon after my return to Sydney I resigned my seat in Parliament from sheer disgust at the reckless expenditure of public money and a strong desire for rest. Then came the mild freak of your Government in sending a military expedition to Egypt, which your journals and public men so much applauded, though, if anything like it had occurred in England [?], it would have been very loudly condemned. This military contingent was sent away without the authority of Parliament, and the colony was plunged into debt to meet the expense. At the present time we have a deficit of fully £1,500,000, though when I resigned office at the beginning of 1883 I left a surplus of £2,250,000. When the Soudan expedition was sent off, I felt so indignant at the conduct of the Government that I offered myself for a vacancy which occurred in our Assembly, and, notwithstanding that I was opposed by every desperate means that the Government could devise, I was elected. Since then a General Election and three changes of Government have taken place. In the General Election I defeated the Premier in his own constituency by a majority of 3 to 2 ; and in two of the new Governments I was invited to join, with a choice of office, but I felt bound, from a sense of want of agreement on matters of principle, to decline."

From America came many letters of appreciation. A "Trinity Historical Society" (Texas) wrote to ask him for his autograph and portrait for its collection, and Mr. Carron Wright, of the Washington Department of Labour, wrote him that *Sixty Years* (like many other works of his) had a place in the archives of his department. "I often think of you," he said, "as a man who enjoys his life in an entirely different way from what most men seek enjoyment; you study your kind, and I know of nothing higher or nobler to attract one's whole thought."

From Canada Goldwin Smith wrote :

"There is nobody in England now besides yourself that has had your experience. Both you and I, I am afraid, have fallen a little behind our age. We have both of us desired peace with justice, and there are people now coming on the scene who, to put it in the mildest form, love justice a good deal better than peace. The industrial world in England is evidently getting into a very disturbed condition, and, as the revolutionary movement in industry coincides with the revolutionary movement in politics, the outcome is likely to be serious. . . . May your remaining days be happy, as they well may be in the consciousness of a life dedicated to promoting the welfare of your fellow men."

In January 1893 Holyoake was elected an honorary member of the National Liberal Club. The distinction was the more appreciated, as he knew it had been withheld for some time on account of his heretical views. As early as 1884 Mr. Morley wrote to him :

"I did not know what course the Committee had taken, and it vexes me much that they should not have shown more courage than—as I presume from your note—they were able to pluck up. It is too bad. The Club is now very strong—quite strong enough to do what it pleases.

To you it must be personally a mere trifle, or even less than a trifle. Many thanks for the paper. I am wholly indifferent what that gentleman says of me, but your good opinion is another matter. I value it, and always shall."

Mr. Morley and W. S. Caine had nominated him for honorary membership, but a hint was conveyed to him that the officers would rather not decide on their application at that time. Later, when it was deemed safe to admit him, the papers were produced, but the word "honorary" was overlooked, and he was made an ordinary member. The Club was financially weakened by Unionist secessions, and Holyoake thought it better to pay a subscription until its position was again secure. He then pointed out to the officers of the Club the oversight in regard to Mr. Morley's application. Unfortunately, the only reply was a reference to a rule of the Club that an honorary member must be nominated by ten members of the Committee before the election could be considered. Holyoake could not help thinking that if the matter had been mentioned to the Committee ten names would soon be forthcoming, but he declined to canvass. The letters, however, were published, and in a few months the secretary informed him that he had been unanimously elected.<sup>1</sup> From that date he was often seen at the Club. In the following winter he was entertained to dinner by the Press Circle of the Club "in recognition of his lifelong services to Liberalism and Liberal journalism." Mr. Allanson Picton took the chair.

The year seems to have been passing pleasantly and

<sup>1</sup> The nominators are : M. P. Manfield, Arnold Morley, F. Schnadhorst, Herbert Gladstone, T. Fisher Unwin, Rhys Davids, J. F. Green, P. W. Bunting, J. G. Shipman, W. C. Anderson, R. Spence Watson, A. G. Symonds, Dadabhai Naoroji, and others. Twenty-three names were put to his nomination-paper. A letter to him about this time indicates the existence of a "Holyoake Cycling Club" somewhere in South London.

industriously, when an accident befel him that gave his friends concern. At the beginning of the year Ingersoll had gently urged him, as many others did, to curtail his activity. "You have borne the heat and burden : enjoy the twilight," he wrote in his fine and affectionate way. "It is a wonderfully encouraging thing," Mr. Acland writes to him in reply to a compliment, "to have such words from a veteran who has seen so many Governments rise and fall." But Holyoake had no idea of retiring. His diary for 1893 is full of movement. The Co-operative, Travelling Tax, and Liberty of Bequest Committees are attended regularly. He attends a meeting at Leman Street on January 13th, and speaks at Prince's Hall (at a meeting of the Marquis of Queensberry's) in the evening. In February he lectured at Stockport (when "the Rev. Mr. Constable moved a vote of thanks, and called on the audience to stand up, which they did"), at Leicester, and other places. He went to Manchester monthly, to London weekly. He attended innumerable dinners, meetings, and other functions ; and he was meantime writing his *Origin and Nature of Secularism*. In May he took part in the Co-operative Congress at Bristol with his usual vigour, visited F. Newman at Weston-super-mare, and took his wife and daughter to see Gloucester jail. In August he spent six days at the Co-operative meetings at the Crystal Palace. At length, in September, his activity was brought to an end for a time, and his health much affected, by an accident. As he was leaving the Board meeting at Leman Street he was knocked down by a lorry. The police and several passengers took him to the London Hospital, where his head was bandaged and plastered. He hastened back to Brighton and bed, to which he was confined for some weeks. The accident occurred on September 20th. On November 5th he delivered two lectures in Liverpool.

Suffering from weak eyes as he did, he was peculiarly liable to meet with accidents in his constant travels. He has given a long list of them, treated in his lightest vein, in *Bygones*. He had half-a-dozen cab-accidents within as many years, which leads him to expend much amusing philosophy on cabs and cabmen. At Ashton one night a drunken cabman was driving him furiously down a street that ended in the river, and had open cellars like graves on either side, when a friend stopped the horse. Holyoake, on returning to London, chose his cab with care, and even asked the advice of the inspector at Euston, but the horse shied and he again ran some risk. Not long afterwards, having occasion to hire a London cab, he chose a heavy man whose weight alone promised to keep his vehicle balanced. They were, moreover, going west, where cabmen are more careful.

"There is," says Holyoake, "a gradation of killing in the streets of London, well known to west-end cabmen. As they enter Trafalgar Square, they run over the passenger without ceremony. At Waterloo Place, where gentlemen wander about, they merely knock you down; but as they enter Club-land, which begins at Pall Mall West, where Judges and Cabinet Ministers and members of Parliament abound, they merely run at you."

It was in Pall Mall that his driver overturned the cab, and so Holyoake concluded quickly that it was not to be a fatal mischance. He explains that, in view of his constant accidents, he was wrapped in a heavy rug to serve "as a sort of buffer." However, he grasped the strap at one side of the cab, dodged the breaking glass, and was extricated—by "two Micawbers who were looking out for anything which turned up or turned over"—with no more than a bruised head and crushed hat. Once he was thrown down by an omnibus, and had a



narrow escape from serious injury. The great danger was from kicks by the horses. When he reflected on their unconscious mercy, in sparing him, he "sent two bags of the fattest feeding cake the Co-operative Agricultural Association could buy, as a present to those two horses." After a time the insurance company declined to keep him on their books for accidents.

The accident he met with in Leman Street in 1893 was the most serious of his adventures, and, though he was lecturing within a few weeks, his health suffered for the next two years. In 1894, moreover, a year of illness and unpleasant controversy, he parted with his youngest daughter (Mrs. Holyoake-Marsh), who had long been of very substantial assistance to him. "Heredity," Mr. Henry Slack wrote to him, "often wants the guidance of discretion, and transmits the wrong qualities, sometimes going far back to find bad ones. In the case of your daughter Emilie we may congratulate heredity on its behaviour." After his daughter's marriage his wife had the whole charge of his health, and an amanuensis wrote letters and journalistic copy at his dictation. His *Origin and Nature of Secularism* was published in 1895, as well as a revised edition of *Public Speaking*, and a controversial booklet, *The Warpath of Opinion*, which we will notice presently. Later chapters will show, too, that he was still busy with Co-operative matters and Rationalist propaganda. But nature was hinting in her many ways that he was breaking the rules with so much activity at that age. He saw the final weakness coming on without any loss of cheerfulness. "Goose for dinner," he notes in his diary about Christmas-time in 1895. "Pain for breakfast," is the next day's entry. It was irksome to have to alter his irresponsible ways in such matters. Moderation in all things was his motto, but he had his own way of interpreting it. Until his last years he would

treat the appointed lunch-hour with contemptuous indifference if work pressed. Even when he was in his seventies he would work on with his daughter for an hour or two after the appointed time, and often have to be dragged to lunch. He would even bribe her with the offer of some exceptional luxury to allow him to finish first the task in hand, if it meant a delay of two hours; though he had a healthy palate, and would say that coffee and cream, with a good cigar, must be one of the joys of heaven. He startled many a waitress in a tea-shop with an order for "tea for two—water for one." In his last decade of life he was persuaded to submit more to discipline.

The more solid work he did in the nineties will occupy the next two chapters. Here we may conclude his eighth decade of life with a selection from the letters that suggest his circle of friends and interests, and reflect his cheerful temper. His successive accidents and publications provoked ceaseless correspondence, and hardly a service was done him, or to any friend of his, that did not call forth a bright note. In thanking Mrs. Mentor Gimson for hospitality, he wrote :

"I send this book for the Xmas amusement of that robust little fellow who put to me more questions than I can answer. . . . The pepper I took in my coffee did at once what I wanted—it restored my voice; but it inflamed my cough. I never thought of that till I was on the platform. Next day I had no cough. If a paper comes out to make you think of everything, I will take it in."

Sir E. Russell and Sir J. Robinson received their knighthood while he was in bed after the Leman Street accident. He at once wrote to congratulate both. "You have allured honour to journalism as well as

earned it," he wrote to Russell ; and " life would be worth living if cabmen would let us try it." To Sir John Robinson he wrote from his bed :

" I have taken in every number of the *Daily News* issued. I have known all its editors, and feel a personal pride that public distinction has been accorded to you."

Of another journalist he wrote to Sir John in 1896 :

" Mr. — has good points and has done generous public things, but steadfastness is not characteristic of him. When editor of the — he was Liberal two days a week, Tory two days a week, and mad the remainder. Do not let him impart these qualities to the *Daily News*. True, I read him in his mad days, from congeniality of temperament. But lunacy is not general amongst your readers."

To an American friend, George Iles, he wrote :

" You must have been born in the Iles of the Blest. Why else should you be so generous to me ? I do not deny that your kindness places some unfamiliar pleasure in my way in the eve of my days, when pleasure has the sweetness of unexpectedness."

Dr. Moncure Conway, who is often quoted as a severe critic of Holyoake's, writes him in 1893 :

" I was sorry to find in it [*Sixty Years*] a sentence of irritation at something I seem to have said, years ago, about your not having signed the Foote petition. Whatever was said was certainly the statement of some fact meant to prove the unanimity of the petition, and not to reflect on you. But that does not in the least affect my appreciation of your book, or of your brave services to so many human causes."

When the Rev. Dr. Robert Collyer received *Sixty Years* he wrote :

"You have lived a life replete with life and life's worth to vast numbers, and stood well in the vanguard of 'the life that man is.' May your days be still long in the land, and pleasant days all of them."

Hearing, a little later, of Holyoake's accident, he wrote :

"OUR DEAR HOLY OAK,

"I hope it was only the bark that got bruised a mite the other day, and that the timbers were not shivered. I know it would be all right with the heart of the oak. . . . Take care of yourself, my man. Don't gad round. There was only one impression when you were struck off. Sir Henry Holland says : 'When I began to skirt the sides of a square instead of taking the diagonal line I knew I was touching old age.' Skirt the sides of the square, my laddie. You may still be limber, but the good book says : 'The Lord regardeth not the legs of a horse or a man.' I hope that is letter-perfect, but my Concordance is a big folio which takes a sight of lifting, so I give you the substance."

Sir Wilfrid Lawson, who corresponded occasionally with Holyoake, wrote him in 1894 :

"I did not think that any one could put the Drink Question in a new light, but you have done so in your capital newspaper-letter. I have long thought that you are one of our few original thinkers and writers, and here is another proof thereof. Likewise the Anti-Drink Crusade in Bechuanaland, on which you touch, does certainly put John Bull in a ludicrous position. But John never can see what a fool he is. He hates any one who tells him so, and also any who tries to do him any good. He has managed now to get such a government as he deserves. May you and I live long enough to see how he likes it."

From Jacob Bright :

"What a kind note you have sent me ! I value highly your judgment, and am pleased to get a note from you."

A man speaks best when he feels most, and just now I feel strongly, especially on the subject of the Lords."

From Sir Joseph Ewart :

"I noted the left-handed reference to me at the time, but did not regard it as sufficiently important to reply to it. I am now glad that I heeded it not, as in that case I would probably have been deprived of a sight of your very appropriate letter, for which and many other kindnesses on your part I am indebted and very grateful."

From Sir Philip Manfield :

"I have come to myself, like the Prodigal Son, and in almost as forlorn a state! My Buxton experience nearly did for me, for some time, and it was a question whether the man or the medicine should conquer. Ultimately genus homo triumphed, but he came out goutless, strengthless, and feeble in mind and body. And to come to this place [House of Commons] as a sanatorium! Isn't this a proof of weakness, if any were wanting?"

From Mr. J. C. Francis, proprietor of the *Athenæum* :

"It was worth while for my letter to appear in the *Daily News* to secure a kind letter from you. I am glad you like what I said. . . . I have plenty of evidence of the work you bestowed on the repeal of the Paper Duty, and also of how hard you worked over the Gibson testimonial. I also know well what a deep regard my father had for you, and I am glad to feel that you have extended your friendship to his son."

To Mr. Henry Salt, who asked him to join the General Committee of the Humanitarian League :

"I willingly authorise you to add my name. Ever since I was a prisoner myself I have held the views of your manifesto."

From the Marquis of Ripon :

"I was glad to see your handwriting again. I hope you are well. I have been obliged to tell Mr. Leslie that I cannot comply with his request, as it does not fall within the rules I have been obliged to lay down for myself in such matters."

From Mr. Isaac Roberts (the astronomer), after reading *Sixty Years* :

"How many men living could, for themselves, show such a record as yours of work done and progress achieved in spite of great obstruction and danger caused by the ignorance, bigotry, and slander of the classes whose interest it was to defeat them ! How many would toil by day and by night, without much encouragement or expectation of reward, in attempting the removal of the ancient chains and fetters which bound the people in mental slavery when you began your work ? But you have triumphed over many of the difficulties, and left the fields of thought and of freedom of speech open to all who choose to cultivate and extend them. Well have you earned the repose towards the end of a laborious life to enjoy the results of your unselfish and untiring exertions. Long may you yet be spared to enjoy the fruits."

Mr. Roberts wrote later, in offering to help G. Julian Harney :

"The old warriors who have so nobly fought the battles of freedom for the people have been too much neglected, and alas ! they are now few in number and far advanced in years."

From Colonel Ingersoll (1897) :

"Thanks for your good letter. Messrs. Foote and Watts spoke to me in the highest terms about you. They knew that I was your friend. And I say to you

that nothing that any human being could say would *decrease* or *increase* my respect, admiration, and love for you. I know you. I know how sincere, candid, and courageous you are. I know that your head is full of wisdom and your heart of kindness. You are the ideal reformer. You see all sides and pierce the centre. There is no better intellectual marksman. Your arrows, like those of Ulysses, fly through all the rings, and cleave the question's heart."

In conversation about Holyoake Mr. Foote had said to Ingersoll: "He will bury us all." "I told him that I hoped so," Ingersoll grimly observes.

To Mr. Hugh Price Hughes, on his *Origin of Secularism*:

"It must have been my publisher who sent you my book. I wished, but hesitated, to do it, lest I might give you pain by obtruding alien views on you. I read with astonishment and pleasure the conspicuous notice of the book in the *Methodist Times*. It justifies the high opinion I had formed of your fearlessness of contrariety of opinion and your generosity to adversaries in faith. I shall consider what you say yourself, and read Dr. Martineau's book, which you regard as an answer to my main errors."

In replying Mr. Price Hughes said:

"I was very glad to see your well-known handwriting again. Your book came to us in the usual way from the publisher, and I was glad to have the opportunity of noticing it myself. I tried to give due expression to your distinctive views, and to show how heartily we agreed with them, so far as they were positive and not controversial. All that you have done and are trying to do is an essential part of the Christian faith; but, while it seems to me to be very desirable as far as it goes, it does not go far enough, for there are certain other and deeper aspects of human need which the practical work of Secularism does not meet."

Professor Masson wrote, after reading *Sixty Years* :

"Your kind gift of the two volumes duly reached me, and should have been acknowledged before now had I not wanted to do something more than merely acknowledge receipt. The volumes have been my most substantial piece of reading, and also the fullest of interest to me, since my return home. I have read them completely from beginning to end, and have to thank you, not only for the kind remembrance implied in your presenting me with a copy of so important and characteristic a book of yours, but also for the quite unusual amount and variety of instruction and pleasure I have derived from its pages."

From Mr. A. R. Cluer :

"The joy of the magistrate is to provide copy for a friendly evening paper. The reporter, not knowing the difference between 'knock over' and 'trip over by a kick,' sadly misunderstands me. At Clifton I admit we did both, and no one complained if any two football opponents, with no ball between them, settled a private quarrel by kicking each other outside a scrimmage. But then we were boys, and no money was on the game, and none of the brutes who have made football disreputable did then exist. The *Westminster* is very good to me, and I trust it will always pull me up when I go wrong. Your portrait hangs in our dining-room, and I heartily congratulate you on your noble age. If I ever reach it, may I be as clear-headed and wise of tongue as you are."

So wide and enviable a circle of correspondents did much to heal the last wounds of his controversies, and lighten the burden of advancing age. He must have felt some pride for his own success when he saw those who had once been by his side—like Cooper, Harney, and Truelove—dragging out their last years amid the privations that too often darken the close of a self-sacrificing life. He sought aid for them, and cheered



them as well as he could. His own genial autumn promised to last, with no winter, until the end came. Tokens of distinction and pleasant invitations continued to reach him throughout the nineties. In 1896 he was made an honorary member of the Institute of Journalists and of the Société de l'étude pratique de la Participation at Paris. A letter from the London Chamber of Commerce invites him in the name of the Committee to a monthly dinner, and to make a speech at it; menus and tickets indicate that gastronomic functions fell to him with due and happy frequency. He was, moreover, approaching his eightieth birthday, and his political friends decided to make it an occasion of especial honour.

On April 12th he was entertained to a dinner at the National Liberal Club that he noted with peculiar satisfaction in his diary. Most of the Liberal members of Parliament were forced to remain at the House for an important debate, but the rest of the party gave him a generous recognition of his services. Mr. W. Morrison took the chair, in the absence of Mr. Morley, and he embraced the occasion eagerly to repeat to the world the honouring phrases that occur in his constant letters to Holyoake. Mr. Fletcher, Dr. Conway, Mr. Hodgson Pratt, Mr. Thompson, and Mr. Spenser Hughes were the other speakers. Holyoake's speech was a remarkable performance for an octogenarian. A few sentences will give an idea of its power and effect:

"When I look round these tables, and see many to whom it would be more fitting that I should do honour than that they should do honour to me, I conclude that it will take me the remainder of my days to reconcile any merit of mine with the distinction of this night. My only apology for living so long—when, in deference to advocates of greater service, I ought to have disappeared before—is that, having invested my best years,

time of the Co-operative Congress at Derby in 1884. The Congresses of 1881 and 1882 had accepted in principle the idea of appointing a special authority to supervise the growing productive societies from this point of view, but it was clear that there was a strong current of feeling in the general body against profit-sharing, and Congress had not power to do anything in the nature of enforcement. Many, moreover, felt that the annual conflict in the Congress meetings impaired their prestige and effectiveness. The idea arose, therefore, of concentrating the propagandist fervour of the adherents of co-partnership in a distinct association, within the limits of the general Co-operative body. Holyoake, I gather, entered with some hesitation upon the creation of this distinct body. Although he was prominent at the Derby Congress, his name does not occur in the scanty records of the new movement until 1886, when he joined its executive and became one of its foremost spokesmen. The tone of the Derby Congress may have given him renewed hope of carrying his ideal within the general movement. The president, Professor Taylor (of Trinity College), had made a strong plea for profit-sharing, and Holyoake, in moving a vote of thanks, had noticed with warmth that this was the first time the presidential address had been devoted to the subject.

That evening some 250 delegates met to discuss the situation, and decided to form a propagandist committee and fund in the interest of co-partnership. It was at first named the Labour Association for the Promotion of Co-operative Production, a name which was changed in 1902 into the Labour Co-Partnership Association. Its aims were to be: (1) to persuade Co-operative stores and mills to adopt the practice of co-partnership, (2) to persuade employers generally to share profits with their employees, (3) to found workshops in which labour should

share the profits and control with capital.<sup>1</sup> On January 13th, 1885, they held their first annual Conference, at Hebden Bridge. Neale, who was the leader of the group, read a paper that forms the charter of the Association.

"I, and those who agree with me," he said, "hold that there has in fact grown up in the development of co-operative action a mode of regarding work and the workers which, if it be allowed to become dominant, must end by depriving Co-operation of its noblest character, till it dwindles from the herald of a higher form of social order into a phase of competitive rivalry. . . . It subordinates production to exchange, and converts the whole function of Co-operation, so far as concerns the profits of productive work, to that of reducing, either directly or indirectly, through a return of dividends on purchases, the price of the things purchased."

He complained, in a word, that there was a tendency in the movement to think more of things than of men. So long as Co-operative stores bought their goods in the general market, and had no control of the producers, the matter was less urgent. In view of the growth of productive Co-operation, it was necessary, he said, to insist on the moral quality of the Co-operative ideal, and they have therefore created an educative association which shall be subsidiary to the Co-operative Union. Of the Union Neale remained general secretary, and the organ of the movement gave friendly prominence, without comment, to the new body.

The second Conference of the new body was held at

<sup>1</sup> This statement of their aims disposes at once of some of the misrepresentations of the body. They never dreamed of confining the practice to productive societies (as distinct from stores); though, as we shall presently find Neale observing, there was more demand for it in the shops where the producers were employed by Co-operators. Further, they never wished the conduct of an industrial concern to be handed over to a body of inexperienced workers, but merely claimed that these should be represented on the board.

Keighley in August, and a resolution was passed "to point out in a fraternal spirit to the Wholesale Society the grave injury they are doing to the cause of Co-operation by their failure to carry out Co-operative principles in their productive works, and to offer their services in discussing practical means of placing the Wholesale workshops upon a true Co-operative basis." The sequel gives us an interesting insight into the condition of the general body on the question. The Wholesale met them in a courteous spirit, and invited them to a discussion. When it was found that the division of opinion on the Wholesale Committee prevented any action from being taken, it was decided to refer the matter to the quarterly meetings of the body. It was submitted at three of these important meetings, but again with no result. At London the majority were in favour of the idea; at Newcastle the majority were hostile to it; and at Manchester the long debate of the subject had to end in the closure.

By this time Holyoake seems to have been wholly convinced of the expediency of the new association, and he was added to the list of its executive. From 1886 onward his chief activity in the Co-operative world is the strenuous and incessant propaganda of the idea of co-partnership. In all that he wrote after that time it is the dominant note, and he watched the fortunes of the Labour Association, and any industries that adopted its idea, with the keenest interest. It must not, of course, be supposed that he therefore ceased to work in the general Co-operative movement. He wrote frequently, until his last years, in the *Co-operative News*, and attended nearly all the meetings of the Newspaper Board at Manchester. He remained an active member of the Central Board until 1894. He attended, with two exceptions, every Congress down to the close of his life; and he

lectured, wrote, and attended other important functions for the general body, to the end. Our chief interest, however, will be to follow his specific work of advocating co-partnership, at the annual Congresses, by lecture, and by correspondence. Co-operative enterprise even without co-partnership was, he felt, not only a great economic reform, but it created a feeling of solidarity and gave a measure of education that the ordinary commercial system could not. He pleaded only that it should add the Owenite feeling of moral responsibility for the worker.

In 1886 Holyoake was prominent in many ways amongst Co-operative workers. In the *News* he published the series of articles on eighteenth-century co-operation which he afterwards gathered into his work *Self-Help a Hundred Years Ago*. It is an extremely interesting research into the first faint dawn of co-operative practice. At the 1886 Congress (at Plymouth) he seconded the vote of thanks to Earl Morley, and supported the commemorative notice of Lloyd Jones, who died in that year. He was active, too, in a slight matter that may meet the eye of some industrious reader, and so must be briefly explained. One finds him pressing for a settlement of an old claim against the movement in connection with his (and Greening's) *Social Economist*. It must be remembered that, while the *Co-operative News* bought up the *Lancashire Co-operator*, Holyoake and Greening had merely abandoned their journal, and so left the field clear for the *News* in the south. There was a vague understanding that, when the new paper prospered, some compensation would be offered. This it was that Holyoake pressed for in 1886 (and earlier), and a small sum was paid. In October, we saw, he went as Co-operative delegate to Italy; and he spoke at the opening of the stately new stores at Newcastle.

In 1887 he was president at the Congress on its

opening day. He used the opportunity to plead for "true principles," but with a moderation that pleased his opponents. In the later stages of the Congress, however, the question was heatedly discussed. Some discontented operatives had in 1886 left the Wholesale boot works at Leicester, and set up a small factory. This was an obvious incentive to raise the question of co-partnership, and Judge Hughes proposed a strong resolution to direct the Wholesale to "put their house in order." Holyoake supported him in a less irritating speech, but an amendment was passed—by 186 votes to 107—deferring the matter to the next Congress. Hughes's letters to Holyoake on the subject of co-partnership are so characteristically pugnacious that one must quote them with discretion. I may give the note he sent just after the Congress of 1887 as an indication of his strong feeling, and to show how the earlier reserve in regard to Holyoake had entirely disappeared in the new coalition of interests :—

"As to our resolutions," he says, "I had to leave for the train, as you know, before the hands were counted, and certainly went away in the mind to sing 'Nunc dimittis'—or, I should rather say (as the original singer of that hymn was inspired by the *salvation* about to come, not quite the other thing, as was our case) to shake the dust off my feet—if we were beaten. On thinking the matter over, however, it occurred to me that I was stale-mated, for what action could I take, not being a member of the Central Board? I had nothing to resign, and the enemy would only chuckle. So I had about concluded to hold my tongue when your note came, and dear old Neale's distress would certainly confirm me, as well as your continuance (as I assume) in office. (What could have possessed Neale? I never was more dumbfounded than when he got up to second the *amendment*!) Now I shall just leave them to stew

in their juice, hoping that you will take care to make it pretty pungent for them. Have you seen the *Spectator*? Hutton, I fancy. The writer understands the position, and his parallel of a Church Congress voting the previous question on a motion that the ten commandments are of universal application is delicious . . .”

The last part of the letter is cut away—not for the sake of the signature, which remains. Co-operators, who know the vigour of Hughes’s language, will admire Holyoake’s discretion. The two men worked cordially together until the death of Hughes in 1896. He seems to have relied very largely on Holyoake to keep up the old standard.

In 1888 Holyoake became president of the Brighton stores, laid the foundation-stone of the Colne stores, and again went as representative to Italy. Neale was president of the Congress that year at Dewsbury, and a fresh pronouncement on profit-sharing was inevitable. He concluded his address with a hope that “some Holyoake of the future would record of co-operators: ‘They had moralised distribution and exchange; and they went on to moralise production.’” The adjourned debate came on in the afternoon, and Holyoake proposed a resolution demanding co-partnership through the United Board and the English and Scottish Wholesale. Mr. Swallow, an accountant of Leeds, moved an amendment to the effect that Congress should send a recommendation to all producing societies to share the risk and the profit between the worker, the capitalist, and the consumer. Swallow writes to Holyoake that this resolution was regarded as “a compromise with a leaning towards the resolutions of the north.” It was thought that Swallow’s amendment was more practical, and Holyoake supported it. To the gratification of the Labour Association it was passed by 213 votes to 160.

It would be somewhat tiresome to follow the conflict through the succeeding Congresses, and I will only recur to it as it becomes more interesting. The resolution passed at Dewsbury was an endorsement of the profit-sharing ideal by the Congress, and it will be understood that Hughes and his colleagues returned to the fray with renewed vigour. For some years the situation was perplexing to those unacquainted with the practical work of the movement. The advocates of co-partnership could carry their principle in Congress whenever it was put to the vote; but the movement meantime continued to unfold its vast proportions, and make little application of their principle. The Congress had no more than a polite advisory status; the businessmen who had the practical control of the producing societies and the stores shrank from the complication of their task by attempting to enforce the scheme recommended to them by Congress; while the shareholders generally resented a reduction of their dividend. It took many years for the disputants on both sides to realise that the annual discussion could have no more than an educative value. At the Ipswich Congress in 1889 the practical northerners tried to defeat the "idealists," but they were themselves defeated, and the Dewsbury resolution re-affirmed. At the Glasgow Congress in 1890 Hughes and Holyoake and their friends went a step further, and carried by a large majority a resolution that

"The United Board be requested to communicate with the 180 societies which have already intimated their willingness to adopt the principles reaffirmed at Ipswich, with a view to their embodiment, where necessary, in their rules: and, secondly, that it be an instruction to the United Board to communicate with the 274 societies which have expressed their willingness to use their



influence in support of the Congress resolutions with federal societies in which they are members, to prepare a plan for giving effect to the above resolutions."

The practice of the Scottish Wholesale, which gave a bonus to employees, gave a favourable atmosphere for renewing the claim, and a Scottish Association for the Propagation of the Principles of the Labour Association was founded during the Congress.

It will be seen from these episodes that the advocates of profit-sharing were not the small group of elderly enthusiasts out of touch with the practical work that they have at times been represented to be. They had the support of a very strong body of feeling in the movement at large, and were able to dominate Congress for ten years. Meantime the Labour Association was furnishing evidence of the practicability of their scheme. From 1889 onwards they held an exhibition of goods manufactured in co-partnership workshops in connection with the annual festival at the Crystal Palace, and they were able to publish encouraging results from works that proceeded on their lines. The Hebden Bridge Fustian Society, registered in 1870, nearly trebled its profit between 1885 and 1895. The Airedale Worsted Society, also founded about 1870, doubled its profit in the same decade. The Leicester Hosiery Works, which began in 1876 with a capital of £30, had in 1890 a capital of £9,807. The Norwich Leather and Grindery Society, which began with a capital of eleven shillings in 1885, had a capital of £224 in 1890. The South Metropolitan Gas Company began to share profits with its employees in 1889, and reported a continuous success of the procedure. With the smaller concerns the number of workmen's Labour Co-Partnership societies increased from 15 in 1883 to 77 in 1893 (and 124 in 1905); their

joint capital rose from £103,436 in 1883 to £619,153 in 1893 (and £1,819,390 in 1905).

Holyoake was assiduous in giving publicity to these favourable facts, and in 1891 he issued his *Co-operative Movement To-day*. It was included in Gibbins's series of "Social Questions of To-day," and inevitably took the form of a tract in propagation of profit-sharing, as well as of a bright historical sketch of the general movement. The copy that is kept in the British Museum Library has ample and vigorous marginal notes that reflect the feeling of some London Co-operator of the practical school, or some admirer of Mrs. Sidney Webb, whose work appeared about the same time. I have indicated in an earlier chapter the several ways in which Mrs. Webb does grave injustice to Holyoake's position and that of his school. Probably she was misled, not only by her chief informant (an opponent of the school), but by Neale's stronger emphasis on the need for profit-sharing in productive societies.<sup>1</sup>

The Congress of 1891 passed with little conflict; possibly because its president, Mr. Acland, had deprecated the "wordy warfare," and suggested in his address that the Wholesale might have advanced a little more if it had been less warmly assailed. "We must agree to differ," the *News* said, commenting on his words. But the 1892 Congress saw a revival of the struggle, though no vote was taken. Holyoake found an indirect opportunity to recommend his ideal. The Congress was held in "the Mecca of Co-operators," Rochdale, and after the service in the parish church on the Sunday

<sup>1</sup> The *Co-operative News* reviews the two books together, and finds several other fallacies, from the general Co-operative point of view, in Mrs. Webb's work. It was an unfortunate mischance for her that the issue of her work, containing a strange perversion of Holyoake's position, should coincide with that of a work by Holyoake in which his real position is strongly affirmed.

afternoon a crowd of delegates gathered about Holyoake at the graves of the two pioneers, Cooper and Smithies. Standing over the remains of the dead Owenites, and glancing from his faded memory of the little store they set up to the imposing modern structure—from the dejected group of weavers in the tiny lecture-room fifty years before to the crowd of delegates about him that told of a great national movement—Holyoake pleaded eloquently for the realisation of the old ideal. The publication of his speeches in the *News* brought him warm letters of thanks from old Co-operators.

Hughes, indeed, thought the persuasive methods of Holyoake and Neale too feeble for the occasion. "I am not sure," he wrote, "that the time has not come for taking off the gloves with Mitchell and his tail." Co-operators will observe with surprise that Judge Hughes fancied he was fighting with gloves on. There is all the unrestrained pugnacity of his "Tom Brown" in his deliverances down to his last year, and he acknowledges that only Neale and Holyoake kept him within certain bounds. Neale resigned the secretaryship in 1892, and died in September of that year. For twenty years Holyoake had had a warm and undisturbed friendship for the great Christian Socialist, and his tribute to him is as sincere as it is eloquent. "His monument is the Co-operative Movement," he exclaimed. Hughes now drew closer to Holyoake in the endeavour to enforce the adoption of profit-sharing. Ludlow still survived of this old school—and maintained always something of its old reserve in regard to Holyoake—but his name rarely appears in the chronicles of the movement. In 1893 I find him writing to express gratitude to Holyoake for some reference to himself, but disapproving his action at Congress. Greening was in the front rank of the combatants. In 1893 he writes to thank Holyoake for

clearing him of the charge of having said that "if the Wholesale did not do what he wanted he could sap its foundations."

But Hughes was, so to say, the dynamo of the co-partnership group during these years. As the Congress for 1893 drew near he concerted a plan of action with Holyoake; even going so far as to ascertain the hotel at which the new secretary, Mr. Gray, would reside, and proposing that Holyoake and he should choose it. He would like, he said, to propose that the Wholesale be expelled from the Union, but "that course would probably be thought too hostile!" Instead of this, he would propose that the Union's shares in the Wholesale be realised, and thus they would withdraw from that "stronghold of the devil." Holyoake again seems to have tempered his zeal, and proposed an alternative. The Congress was held at Bristol, and during its course Maxwell read a paper on "The treatment of Co-operative employees," in which he spoke of the success of the Scottish system (of giving bonuses). At once Holyoake rose to move a resolution that Congress re-affirm the principle of co-partnership, congratulate the Scottish Wholesale on its adoption (to some extent) of that principle, and urge the English Wholesale to follow its example. Hughes and Greening gave their warm support, and Mrs. Webb seems to have led the opposition, declaring that "co-partnership was a meaningless term" and insisting that what the "individualists" wanted was "a self-governing workshop."<sup>1</sup> An amendment was then proposed, that

<sup>1</sup> I have earlier pointed out the fallacy of the terms she employs, but may recur to the point, as many social students must have been misled by Mrs. Webb's very able book. The chief aim of the Labour Association, which always discouraged enterprises with too small a capital, was not to create a number of isolated "self-governing workshops," but to induce the largest concerns to admit their employees to a share of the profits. The larger the concern, and the more closely federated

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substituted the words "urge all federal bodies to adopt it" for the explicit reference to the Wholesales, and, with this change, Holyoake's resolution was almost unanimously adopted.<sup>1</sup>

A few further words will bring this historic struggle in the annual Congress to a close. At Sunderland in 1894, in a hostile district and with a hostile president, the usual attempt was made to "re-affirm the principle." The chairman declared, on a show of hands, that the voting "seemed to be about equal," and, in the confusion that followed Mr. Greening's demand for a vote, carried the meeting on to the next item. As the 1895 Congress drew near, Judge Hughes resumed his pyrotechnic correspondence. "It will," he said, "probably be our last chance of getting the Union back on to the original and only safe lines." Mitchell, their most powerful opponent, had recently died. The Congress was to be held at Huddersfield, and once more the president would be favourable. Hughes suggested, therefore, that he should move the old resolution, and Holyoake second it, in the form in which it had been passed twenty years before. After some correspondence with Mr. Gray and others, he modified its terms, and promised to "keep clear of all names, and try to be as conciliatory as possible." They were to concert action at the hotel with Greenwood, Thomson (the president), and Blandford.

But a change was coming over the situation. The

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the various concerns were, the better. It then urged, as a subsidiary ideal, that, as is profitably done by the South Metropolitan Gasworks, the workers as well as the capitalists should have representatives on the Board. Establishments set up by groups of workmen, provided they can command the requisite capital and skill in management, naturally offer the readiest application of the principle.

<sup>1</sup> The main part of it was: "That we re-affirm the principle of the co-partnership of labour as an essential of industrial co-operation, and as the best mode to adopt to create a greater interest by the employees of the movement in its work and advancement."

younger workers in the profit-sharing camp regretted the friction that had continued so long, and thought the time had come, not to put off the gloves, in the ardent veteran's phrase, but to concentrate their energy on peaceful educative work outside the Union.

"Both Mr. — and Mr. — and myself," one of Holyoake's colleagues wrote to him, "feel that very little is to be gained by urging the Stores to urge the Wholesale at present to take up profit-sharing. If they did it at all, they would probably do it in a half-hearted way. . . . We all think therefore that what we have to do is to perfect and strengthen our own co-partnership societies, and when these have multiplied and grown strong, and federated together more perfectly, they will be able to exercise an influence on the movement which may one day bring about a really genuine co-partnership organisation in the Wholesale also. . . . We cannot approve any organised action to influence the Stores, or their chief officers, or the employees of the Wholesale, in the direction of co-partnership in the Wholesale itself."

Under this pressure the veterans withheld their resolution, and came to an informal agreement with their opponents before the Congress met at Huddersfield. Delegates who came in expectation of another tense discussion of the eternal question were surprised to find a resolution quietly passed that authorised the Central Board to bring together representatives of the two wings of the movement in a conference. The rest of the story is brief, for the round-table discussion served to establish definitely an irreconcilable difference. The majority of the representatives passed a resolution in favour of some undefined degree of participation in profits. The minority (mainly consisting of members of the English Wholesale) drew up a report in the opposite sense.



When the Congress met in 1896 at Woolwich there was a long discussion of the report, and it was finally referred to the sectional meetings and a subsequent Congress. Neither Hughes nor Holyoake appeared at the next Congress (at Perth). The virile spirit of the Christian Socialist had succumbed at last, and Holyoake was, he explained, too busy with his history of the Leeds Society to make the long journey. Save for a moving appeal for the old ideal by the Bishop of Durham in 1900, the annual Congress has not since been made the arena of this remarkable struggle.

We may retrace our steps a little, therefore, and consider Holyoake's activity on behalf of his Co-operative ideal in other fields. The Labour Association had not an unprosperous record of work done by the time when Judge Hughes was preparing his final attack. In 1893 the original 15 societies, with a trade of £160,751, had increased to 109 societies, with an annual trade of a million and a quarter; and so effectively was the principle spreading in the Union that by the end of the century 228 of the Distributive Stores (including large ones like Derby, Manchester Equitable, Woolwich, Bolton, and Plymouth), or 24 per cent. of the whole membership of the movement, were acting on its principle. In this work Holyoake was respected as an active leader. "To him our thanks are especially due, for he has helped us at every point," the new organ of the Association observed in its first issue. At its annual meeting in 1894 he was appointed president of the Association, and he marked out its programme with his usual felicity. It was to be—on the analogy of the University Extension movement—the "Co-operative Extension" body, acting "not in antagonism, for we are against disunity or disruption, and we all of us belong to the movement." He wrote regularly in its organ, *Labour Co-Partnership*, from its

start in 1894 until six months before his death, and helped to give it the brightness and solidity that distinguished it. In the second issue, in fact, the editor (Aneurin Williams) had to correct a very general misapprehension that Holyoake was its editor. He figured also on the lecturing staff of the Association, attended all its conferences and annual exhibitions, and has left behind him a small collection of silver keys and trowels that tell of his prominence at other important functions.

In 1895 commenced the series of International Congresses of the Co-operative body, and Holyoake took a deeply interested part in this fresh and significant extension of the movement. Letters still reached him from all parts of Europe, seeking his guidance or conveying warm expressions of regard for him as—to borrow the phrase that Earl Grey applied to him at the first International Congress—"the Father of Co-operation." "The ideas promoted by you are spreading in Hungary," Dr. Bernat writes him; but "the *lucri bonus odor* is very often pushing away the higher ideals," and he wants to translate some of Holyoake's works, which are "the textbook of Co-operative *morale*." "Toute la Co-opération Française va apprendre cette nouvelle avec une émotion naturelle," writes M. Robert to his daughter, after the accident of 1893. "Your health was most enthusiastically drunk," Mr. Gray writes him after returning from Milan; and the Milanese Co-operators still sent him the Christmas *panettone* each year. He had, in fact, left a peculiarly deep and pleasant impression on the Milanese Co-operators. In 1894 they telegraphed to him: "The Co-operative Congress of Milan approves your advice and proposals, sending you a hearty greeting as their teacher." In 1895 they sent Holyoake a bronze replica of the silver medal they had had specially made to express their gratitude to the Rochdale Pioneers on

the occasion of the Rochdale Society's jubilee; he could not help contrasting this with the fact that the Rochdale Society itself had omitted to invite him to the festive celebration of its jubilee. Buffoli, Maffi, Concini, and other leading Italian Co-operators wrote frequently and affectionately to "Il gentilissimo Signor Holyoake." The Co-operators of Holland still pressed him for literary contributions. "People are generally in Holland not very interested in Co-operative literature," writes the secretary of the Nederlandsche Co-operative Bond, "but what comes from Mr. Holyoake is always read." A little Dutch girl to whom he sent his portrait wrote him in English: "Father says I cannot yet conceive the great value of this present, but that I will do so when I am greater." The Musée Social at Paris awarded him a bronze medal in 1897 for some essay he had sent them on co-partnership. It did not, M. Robert wrote him, come within the limits of the competition they had announced, but its "intrinsic merit" forced the jury to assign him a medal. Mr. Horace Plunkett wrote gratefully to him on behalf of Irish Co-operators; and even from far Japan (from an official in the Home Department) he received consultations on the movement.

The framing of an international organisation therefore appealed to him with especial interest, and when the International Alliance convened the first International Congress in 1895 he gladly attended it. Greening and others had been working for some time in this cause, and had brought the threads to a common centre at London. Unhappily, it seemed as if the perpetual conflict was to be withdrawn from the arena of the national Congress only to be renewed in that of the international. Earl Grey, the president of the Alliance, was an ardent advocate of profit-sharing, and the names of

Greening, Holyoake, Hodgson Pratt, and Wolff excited some suspicion in the north. Some strong letters from Greening and Wolff to Holyoake occur during the arrangement of the Congress. It met in London in August, at the time of the Crystal Palace Festival in 1895, and brought delegates from France, Italy, Belgium, Germany, Austria, Holland, Roumania, Russia, and the United States. Impressive as the gathering was as an indication of world-growth, its elements were not a little menacing from the point of view of the "practical" men. From the nature of the case it was mainly a gathering of "idealists." Earl Grey pleaded strongly for profit-sharing, and when he called upon Holyoake, as the "Father of Co-operation," to move a resolution, the northerners were on the alert. They soon learned that it was sought to make profit-sharing an essential feature of the Alliance, and the conflict began once more. As before, it ended in a compromise, and the Labour Association had to continue its "Co-operative Extension" labours.

In 1894 Holyoake sent in his resignation to the Southern Section of the Central Board, as he was no longer able to travel regularly in the winter.

"In terminating my connection with the Board," he said, "which has extended over a quarter of a century, I have cherished memories of eminent colleagues with whom I have had the pleasure of acting, and I shall always look back not without satisfaction on the work done, though less than I had hoped to see, and less than was possible. My interest in the work you will continue can never cease except with my life, and I hope to meet again and again each member of the Board in other departments of Co-operative activity in which I hope further to work."

The secretary begged that they might still have him as an honorary member—"the members of the Board are

particularly desirous . . . that there shall be no break in your connection with the movement you have loved and served so well"—and he assented. He assured them that there was no shade of hostility in his resignation. It must have seemed to many of his friends like the casting off of the first great hawser when some stately ship is preparing to leave its moorings. But there was still much work for him in the Co-operative world. With the exception of 1897 he attended Congress with unfailing regularity to the end, and wrote his bright sketches of it annually in the *News*. "To think of a Congress without you is indeed Hamlet without the Prince," Maxwell wrote him in 1897, when he had declared his inability to go to Perth. The Scottish Co-operators wired him a warm greeting, and a friend wrote him that he chanced to fall into conversation with a bishop-visitor about him. "The bishop holds you in the highest esteem—so there may be a chance for you yet," he said.

It was no disinclination, or fear of the journey, that kept him away from Perth, but the stress of writing the Jubilee-history of the Leeds Society in time for the event. It was finished in August, and he not only took an important part in the jubilee-festivities at Leeds in September, but went to Delft for the International Congress. The members of the Leeds Society were not a little gratified when he was able, a little later, to send them the following message from the present King:

"It affords His Royal Highness great satisfaction to learn that the Society has attained such a pre-eminent position, and he would be glad if you would assure them that they are right in supposing he will read their story with much interest."

The Peterborough Congress in 1898 saw him moving

amongst its leaders as genially as ever. Ludlow rarely appeared, or is rarely mentioned, at Co-operative meetings, and Holyoake was the one representative left of the apostolic days. Hughes had died early in 1896. "You were brothers in arms, and have fought nobly for the recognition of the true interests of labour," wrote Mr. J. Greenwood, in asking him to lay a wreath on Hughes's grave on behalf of the Hebden Bridge Society. He took his wife and a few friends, and laid the wreath with dignity and tenderness over the remains of his colleague. All the old reserve between them had long since broken down. Hughes had been energetic to the end. In 1894 the Co-operators had erected a bust to Neale in St. Paul's and deputed Mitchell, the chief opponent of co-partnership, to unveil it. Hughes was very angry, and even made the dire British threat of writing to the *Times* to expose Mitchell's misdeeds. Holyoake attended the unveiling, but protested privately against the choice. It was proper, he wrote to Mr. Gray, that Mitchell should hand over the monument on behalf of the Union, but the eulogy should have come from the lips of Hughes or Ludlow or the Marquis of Ripon. "An adversary may pay a *tribute*, but in death it is sympathy which is honour, and it is a sacred duty to consider the sentiments of the family. But I am French in my ideas, and you must forgive me."

He was gratified, as the older men disappeared, to find so powerful an advocate as Earl Grey pleading earnestly for their ideal of Co-operation. They spoke together at the Crystal Palace in 1898. After Earl Grey's address Holyoake sent to him a pencilled note of comment, and Earl Grey returned it with the message: "I should be very proud if you would put your signature and the date to this paper—I should like to keep it as an autograph." Later he wrote to Holyoake: "I think there are signs

in the air of a coming change in the attitude of both employees and employer towards co-partnership. I have received one or two most encouraging letters." The letter that Holyoake wrote in the *Times* on August 25th, in reply to Jones, was written at Earl Grey's suggestion. "You are," he said, "the best living witness as to what was the faith of the founders of Co-operation, and a 'slip of Owenism' into the bargain." When the letter appeared Earl Grey wrote:

"MY DEAR MR. HOLYOAKE,

"I read with much pleasure and grateful appreciation your admirable letter in reply to Jones. The press, with the exception of the *Daily Chronicle*, is warmly on our side, and if we keep pegging away we shall beat the Wholesale. I have a party of about 450 Co-operators coming here [Howick] next Saturday. They represent the committees of the Northern Societies. The object of the gathering is to impress them with their duties, especially that of sending profit-sharers to Manchester. Thanking you again for your most timely and valuable letter in yesterday's *Times*."

With such able protagonists furthering the efforts of younger men like Mr. Vivian and still vigorous apostles like Greening and Aneurin Williams, and in view of the continuous progress of the Labour Association, Holyoake was not indisposed to sing a resigned Nunc Dimittis; though we shall still find industrious years to chronicle. By his eightieth birthday the number of Co-operative Societies had increased to 1,730, with a million and a half members, and an annual trade of sixty-one millions, in the United Kingdom alone. Rarely was the parable of the mustard-seed so illustrated. Even if there were no hope of the co-partnership of labour being accepted as an essential and general feature, the movement was in itself a vast economic

advantage to the workers of the country. But when he saw that one fourth of these Co-operators had embodied the idea in their Societies, and a large further proportion were in favour of its adoption, and so many able and devoted men worked for that adoption, he looked with kindling eyes over the issue of his early exertions.



## CHAPTER XXVII

### THE RATIONALIST PRESS ASSOCIATION

DURING the years when Holyoake was bringing to its culmination his work in the Co-operative world he was engaged in a somewhat similar task with regard to his Secularist activity. Full as his life had been of absorbing ideals and vivid struggles, it will generally be admitted that these two were to him the most permanent and most treasured. So many, indeed, of his earlier tasks had been quite accomplished. He saw a united and prosperous Italy, a great Republic in France, and comparative freedom in Hungary and Germany. He moved amidst a transformed proletariat in his own country, with a free and cheap press, cheap trains, free education, a free Sunday, and vast political power. But his Co-operative and Secularist ideals were only partly realised, and must be preached to the end; though the enormous progress they had made lent cheering confidence to the struggle.

I say that even his Secularist ideal had made enormous progress, although, on the surface of the matter, here seems to have been his most distinct failure. The present chapter will show how, under the apparent failure, he saw a real and stupendous success. He did not measure that success by the small size or the spirit of the National Secular Society. He realised in time that, while he was looking anxiously for the return of that

body to the lines on which he had first placed it, the work he cherished had been proceeding in quite other quarters, over the whole broad land, with rapid pace ; and he came in the end to lead a fresh educative and critical body that never gave him a moment's concern as to the quality of its work, and that in a few years numbered more members than the National Secular Society had numbered in half a century. This is the story of his last relations with those who retained the name he had coined, Secularist, and of his final and happy refuge in the Rationalist Press Association.

Charles Bradlaugh died on January 30th, 1891. The second truce that had been arranged between him and Holyoake in 1882 or 1883 was unbroken until the time of his death ; indeed, there had been only one brief interruption of their attitude of mutual politeness since 1878. It is not idle to notice that, as Bradlaugh's character matured, the friction between them lessened to a vanishing point. So far did that maturing go that the *Pall Mall Gazette*, in an obituary leader on him, spoke of his later "deferential and conciliatory attitude." On the other hand, there were prominent freethinkers who complained of his growing lukewarmness in their cause ; even some of the closest friends of his early years, like the poet Thomson, now assailed him with unparalleled invective. Holyoake remained silent, and when the lips of his former colleague were sealed for ever he wrote only honouring notices of him (in the *Bradford Observer*, the *Argus*, and other papers). He stood by the grave-side at Brookwood, amongst the immense crowd of mourners, and, as he believed and intended, gently laid every trace of resentment in the grave. That they were indeed more friendly towards the end is seen from the fact that he was engaged to speak as substitute for

Bradlaugh at the Hall of Science on the following Sunday. The intervention of death turned his address into a funeral oration.

"He was," Holyoake said, to a crowded gathering, "the most illustrious fighting propagandist they had ever seen. They knew how much they had lost, the country knew how much it had lost, and India knew how much it had lost. Freedom could not be obtained by any party if they shrank from the price to be paid for it. Bradlaugh knew this, and he paid the price. He was a great man because he had genius—the genius of liberty, the genius of discovering how to advance the cause of the people in ways that nobody else saw. He understood the difference between wishing and willing. His creed was to take the world as he found it, and try to make it better."<sup>1</sup>

His law-suits and many other demands upon his resources left little money at his death, and a subscription was raised for his daughter. Later on funds were collected for the erection of a monument. In both these enterprises Holyoake took an active part. A letter from his friend Thomas Burt shows that he was pressing the collection within the House of Commons, and it is well known that he induced "Edna Lyall" to make an appeal, and so brought great increase to the funds. Miss Bayly had, on hearing the situation, sent a gift of fifty pounds to Mrs. Bonner (Bradlaugh's daughter), and Holyoake then pressed her to write a letter to the papers on behalf

<sup>1</sup> Ingersoll wrote him: "I have just read with great pleasure your article on the career and character of Bradlaugh, and I think that you have stated with admirable clearness the important things in his life. Of course, I know that he lacked the subtlety and tenderness that excite your admiration, but he certainly had force and strength, and moved in straight lines towards a definite end." Ingersoll's own letter on Bradlaugh was so qualified that the *National Reformer* declined to insert it, when Holyoake suggested this.

of the fund. She at once wrote a generous letter that greatly helped the subscription. In a note to Holyoake she says that even her publishers have sent her a cheque for £25 for the fund.<sup>1</sup>

In the following year Holyoake took part in a commemoration of Bradlaugh's birth at the South Place Chapel, and, when there was (in 1893) an announcement of the cessation of the *National Reformer*, he wrote to Mr. J. M. Robertson, the editor :

"DEAR ROBERTSON,

"Count me among those who regret the cessation of the *National Reformer*, which has never had stronger claims on intellectual Freethinkers than in your hands."

But from the beginning of 1893 the clouds began to settle on the horizon once more. Mrs. Bradlaugh-Bonner was then writing the life of her father in serial issues of the *National Reformer*, and each reference to Holyoake was watched eagerly. Holyoake disliked the character of most of them, and began to take exception to them. A number of notes were exchanged with Mrs. Bonner, who insisted that she thought Holyoake's attitude had been "one of profound personal antagonism to my father." The biography was published in two volumes in 1894, with the observations unmodified. These remarks were naturally based upon statements made in the *National Reformer* by Mrs. Besant and Mr. Bradlaugh in the heat of controversy, and it would

<sup>1</sup> Miss Bayly had some friendly correspondence with Holyoake, whom she much admired, and this has given rise to the notion that she took him as the model for Luke Raeburn in *We Two*. Others declared that Bradlaugh was the model. I understand from a relative of hers that Luke Raeburn is not intended to represent either of the leading Secularists, though, no doubt, they would both be much in her mind.

be unknown to the later writers that Holyoake had refuted most of them at the time ; but Mr. Bradlaugh had failed to insert his corrections on the more material issues. Holyoake's character was unpleasantly presented in many of these references, and the wide circulation of the book, especially when it passed to a cheaper edition in 1895, could not but cause him great pain. He turned reluctantly to the bundles of dusty letters and pamphlets which he had preserved in relation to the various episodes, and of which I have made a sparing use in this work.

Few men would, probably, have done the work of exculpation in such circumstances with unruffled temper, and Holyoake had in 1896 the nerves of an aged, ailing, and injured man. In a little pamphlet which he entitled *The Warpath of Opinion*, he challenged all the strictures laid on him by his young critics, and resuscitated impressions of Bradlaugh that he thought he had laid in the open grave at Brookwood. The booklet had two faults that one is not surprised to find in the work of an octogenarian. It betrays irritation in tone, and it fails to take all the advantage that his stores of material should have enabled him to do. But the rumour of his work spread amongst friends of both Holyoake and Bradlaugh, and they induced him to suspend the publication of the pamphlet. A few copies were given in confidence to friends, but when he heard that the contents were being discussed he promptly demanded that they should be returned. "Vindication of myself is of small importance," he wrote to Mr. Forder, "while dissensions, however ill founded, would be an evil by diverting many from useful work." He could not, however, avoid a feeling of pain that friends who had not, as far as he knew, attempted to have the imputations suppressed, were now so insistent that he should not answer them. A

letter that he wrote to the *Sun* will best exhibit his feeling and intention, when the first irritation was allayed :

“ You rightly represent the paragraph that appeared in the *Literary Guide* which says I have decided not to publish the *Warpath of Opinion*. At present, the editor might have said, for I have not relinquished my right to publish what I please and when I please, in defence of myself. The statements I controvert I thought were dead and buried many years ago. But in these days of spiritualism and mediums you never know when a dead error may revisit the earth. I should not have troubled about these things had they not been revived in volumes described as ‘historic,’ and which in many respects deserved to be long read. I never had that ‘endemic perennial fidget’ (for which Cardinal Newman had just contempt) about the effect of publishing personal truth lest some persons should be shocked at discovering that they had been misled. It has been in deference to one person alone that I have deferred the publication of the *Warpath*. Unity by suppression is a hollow thing in any party: in a Rationalistic party it should be impossible.”<sup>1</sup>

The pamphlet, I have said, suffers by comparison with Holyoake’s other works; but it must not be imagined that it contained anything more than the common charges against Bradlaugh. Colonel Ingersoll wrote of it (1898):

“ MY DEAR, DEAR FRIEND,

“ I read your book about Bradlaugh and a few others, and I think I appreciate what they intended, and realise what your feelings must be. Organisation always

<sup>1</sup> It was clearly his intention to have the pamphlet reserved amongst his biographical material. Some years later, however (in 1901), he felt again that his right to answer his critics was being unduly challenged, and he allowed a few copies of the work to be sold. Mrs. Bonner then wrote a pamphlet in reply.

brings envy and all sorts of *littleness* to the front. It is easy to work for a cause, but it is generally hard to work with others. They become jealous and hostile. I want just as little as possible to do with folks. I do not care to lead, but I hate to follow the egotistic and idiotic. You have always been for the right—for the cause without regard to yourself. It was enough for you to be useful—useful in the highest sense. There are many Free-thinkers who have but little humour, but little real *heart*. . . . But no matter. You have done well. You have earned the right to be serene and satisfied.”

Indeed, the final summary of Holyoake’s opinion of Bradlaugh may well be reproduced here, lest the reader take too unflattering a view of the contents of the pamphlet. He wrote (p. 62):

“When writers arise who know Mr. Bradlaugh’s whole career, a more discriminating and higher estimate will be given of him than we have yet seen. Devotion to pursuits of public usefulness did not, in his opinion, absolve him from keeping a financial promise, as I knew, and have heard friends who aided him testify—a virtue not universal in this day. No wonder the environment of his early life lent imperiousness to his manners. In later years, when he was in the society of equals, where masterfulness was less possible and necessary, he acquired courtesy and a certain dignity—the attributes of conscious power. He was the greatest agitator, within the limits of the law, who appeared in my time among the working people. He was a daring defender of public right, and not without genius in discovering methods for its attainment. Had he lived in the first French Revolution, he had ranked with Mirabeau and Danton.”

From this unpleasant episode we have, unhappily, to turn to another before we conclude Holyoake’s relations with the Secularist body. It was imagined for a moment

that all its adherents could unite in action for the Secularist cause after the solemn peace that fell over Bradlaugh's grave. Mr. G. W. Foote was now president of the National Secular Society, and Holyoake again accepted a vice-presidentship, and resumed friendly relations with Mr. Foote and Mr. Watts. With Mr. Watts he remained friendly to the end, but what we have previously seen will prepare the reader to expect a speedy dissolution of the association with Mr. Foote. On hearing that he had accepted the vice-presidentship, Mr. Foote expressed a wish that Holyoake would be able to join in active work with him for the reconstruction of the National Secular Society. He complained that, of late years, the work of the Society had been so much neglected that a severe task was laid on him; and he desired that co-operation of the founder of Secularism for the lack of which the cause had suffered so severely. He proposed that the monument to Bradlaugh should take the form of a "Bradlaugh Memorial Hall," and he had Holyoake's support in meeting the violent quarrels that arose out of the difference of opinion in the Secular party as to the form of this memorial.

But by 1894 the new alliance was very rudely broken. The incident that led to the rupture will have for most readers an element of melodrama, if not of comedy, especially when they hear that Holyoake incurred great odium in the Secularist body on account of it. Some years earlier the Rev. Hugh Price Hughes had written a very rhetorical account of the conversion of an "atheist shoemaker," but declined to give the real name of the convert or any specific details by which to verify it. After several years of vain attempt to draw him Mr. Foote wrote a pamphlet on the matter. His criticism may be summed up in his own heavy phrases, "palming off lies as truth" and "the deliberate dissemination of lies."



He professed to be astonished when Mr. Hughes was not induced by this kind of language to notice his demand for details, and in a second edition of his pamphlet (which bore the title *A Lie in Five Chapters ?*) he said :

“I unhesitatingly call Mr. Hughes's story *a lie* from beginning to end. It does not contain even a mixture of truth ; it is pure, unadulterated falsehood.”

Mr. Hughes had certainly been guilty of an artistic treatment, without serious alteration, of the information supplied to him ; but this reckless language gave him his opportunity. He asked Holyoake, whom he knew slightly, to investigate the story. Giving him the names of his informants (two sisters of the Wesleyan Mission and the convert's widow), he himself quitted London, and held no further communication with Holyoake until his opinion was given.

Holyoake at once found that every material word in the story had actually been laid before Mr. Hughes by these three witnesses, and they insisted that it was correct. He reported, therefore, that the imputation of “lying from beginning to end” was totally unjustified. Indeed, there was not a single detail of consequence in the narrative that was not repeated by the witnesses, and so there was no ground whatever for a charge of mendacity. Whether Mr. Hughes ought to have made a more laborious research was another matter, but on the charge of fabricating Mr. Foote was hopelessly discredited, and Mr. Hugh Price Hughes fully vindicated. Mr. Foote, however, adroitly shifted the whole issue. He was forced to admit that the Wesleyan Mission had taken under their care a young shoemaker, who represented himself (and was still more strongly represented by his wife) as an atheist. He came now to the conclusion that “Julia [the widow] deceived Mr.

Hughes and the sisters, and kept up the deception when introduced to Mr. Holyoake." Instead, however, of expressing the least regret at having branded Mr. Hughes as a deliberate liar and fabricator "from beginning to end," he wrote a fresh pamphlet, with the sub-title, *A Study in Lying*, and repeated in it the most offensive of his epithets, with a few more. He insisted that witnesses were "invented" by Mr. Hughes; triumphantly disproved the statement that the convert was a lecturer—a statement only made by himself, and explicitly disclaimed by Mr. Hughes;<sup>1</sup> and on the slenderest evidence denied the young man's own statement that he had been an atheist.

The episode was so trivial in itself, and Holyoake's verdict was so just and inevitable, that the reader will learn with amazement that even educated Freethinkers wrote him letters that gave him great pain. Usually, the burden of them was a complaint of "injury to the party." But the action of the executive of the National Secular Society relieved Holyoake of any concern on that account. They passed a resolution, a copy of which was sent to Holyoake, expressing "warm approval of the President's action" and "a hope that Mr. Holyoake would see his way to send a communication to the President that will satisfy the expectations of the Secular party." When Holyoake made a few natural observations on this notion that he should apologise to Mr. Foote for having pricked the balloon of his rhetoric, the executive wrote again. They were surprised at "Mr.

<sup>1</sup> Mr. Hughes had said—quite fairly on the information before him—that the man had often spoken, and felt "the glow of oratory," in the parks and Secularist halls. Mr. Foote, of all men, should have recollected how much of the talking is done by unknown men in the audience in such places, at the close of the lecture. But the reader who wishes to understand Holyoake's feeling at the time will probably find it sufficient to read Mr. Foote's two pamphlets—noting, especially, the addition in the second edition of the first pamphlet.

Holyoake's fantastic misconception of the Executive's plain and civil message," assured him that only Mr. Foote's generous entreaties had ensured moderation in their language, and expressed their "profound regret that Mr. Holyoake's tender regard for the susceptibilities of the Rev. Hugh Price Hughes has led him to act so ungenerously and unjustly to the President of the National Secular Society"!

To this extraordinary missive the only possible answer was silence. When, in the following year, the National Secular Hall Company, of which Holyoake was still a director, fell into serious difficulties, he retired from that enterprise also. His great crime, however, seems to have been condoned, as he wrote frequently in the *Free-thinker* after 1896, and there are some genial letters to him from Mr. Foote down to 1901. But his critical interest in theology was now finding embodiment in a new institution that promised better results and more cultivated methods. A few detached Societies—such as the admirable Secular Society at Leicester and the Secular School at Failsworth—still worked in the spirit of his old ideal of Secularism, but the work of the movement generally interested him less and less, and he looked without concern on the gradual decay of its branches and depopulation of its halls.

The reader will recollect that these attacks upon Holyoake from two different quarters of the freethinking camp coincide with a period of protracted illness, and must have caused him some sadness. He knew well how much he had sacrificed in fidelity to his Secularist opinions, yet there was no field he had ever worked in where those who profited by his early labours assailed him so bitterly, and on such trivial grounds, as in this field. Fortunately, as the last decade of the century wore on, a new organisation appeared to which he could

with confidence entrust the essential features of his early ideal. This was the publishing committee that in time became the well-known Rationalist Press Association. In speaking of the success of his work in this field, I am not merely referring to the advance of this Association. Even had it not appeared, Holyoake might still have contemplated the decay of Secularism without concern. The theology of 1900 was a very different theology from that he had heard in his youth: the clergy of 1900 were a very different body from the clergy of 1830. The marvellous broadening of the Churches themselves was far more significant than the founding of any society with a few hundred advanced members.

Yet he had interest in the formation of a society that should provide a common centre for liberal thinkers, and convey the more advanced truths of science, history, and philosophy to the mass of the people. As early as 1887 I find Mr. H. L. Brækstad, an old friend of his, writing to him :

"Your idea of the Central Bureau for Freethinkers has grown upon me since I saw you last Saturday. I see more and more the importance of it, especially if it were possible to open it in some nice and pleasant rooms in a central thoroughfare. During my walks last week I kept my eyes open, especially in Fleet Street, Strand, Charing Cross, and the lower part of Regent Street."

Three years afterwards we discover the first germ of the later Association. Holyoake had found at last the necessary auxiliary in the publisher, Mr. C. A. Watts, and in the little office of his printing and publishing establishment in Johnson's Court the new organisation, called at first the Propagandist Press Committee, was inaugurated in 1890. Holyoake was president of the Committee, and he remained president, through its

successive changes into Rationalist Press Committee and Rationalist Press Association, until the day of his death. Its object was from the start defined as "to assist in the production and circulation of liberal publications." For many years scholarly works of an advanced character could not find publication in the ordinary way, on account of the smallness of the circulation, and the task of the Committee was to collect funds from its few score members to defray the expense of issuing two or three such works every year.

The Committee made steady progress under Holyoake's presidency, and before his death he saw its membership rise beyond the membership of the National Secular Society in Mr. Bradlaugh's most active years (Bradlaugh gave the number as 1190), and enter upon a phase of activity that left all earlier organisations of that character far behind. In 1899 the Committee was dissolved, or merged in the legally incorporated Rationalist Press Association, of which Holyoake became president. Its growth was now more rapid, and in 1902 it began to issue the sixpenny reprints of large and important publications with which its name is generally associated. In two years, with its slender publishing resources and in spite of the reserve with which such publications were still largely regarded, it sold 600,000 copies of these books. The number was more than doubled during the following three years, despite the fact that the Association had loosed an avalanche of cheap literature in which its more serious works had little prominence. In this new atmosphere, and with such strong indications of permanence about him, Holyoake felt that the critical work to which he had always attached such importance would, when the pen fell from his own nerveless hand, be still maintained in the spirit he desired. Secularism in the old sense was no longer practicable. The hundred

interests in secular causes that he had once thought to bind up in one organisation were now entrusted to a hundred intent and specialised bodies. The one thing that remained was the criticism of what he believed to be erroneous religious traditions, in a broad, cultured, refined way, and with a care to impart positive education while older views were being modified or removed. He was satisfied that this was, and would continue to be, the work of the Rationalist Press Association. And, although he gradually resigned nearly every other official position before the end came, he died president of the new Association. This work is its tribute to his genial and inspiring personality.

In the course of the nineties he undertook other pieces of subsidiary work in connection with his Rationalist propaganda. The most important of these was the founding of a Liberty of Bequest Committee, of which he was president from its inception, early in the nineties, until near the close of his life. The freedom of bodies of heretics was still restricted by several laws, in spite of the enormous progress made in his time. One of these laws was the Sunday Act, which prevented them, where it was rigorously enforced, from charging for admission to their lectures on Sundays, and so put them at an unfair disadvantage. Another injustice arose from the state of the law in regard to bequests. Time after time legacies to freethinking bodies were confiscated by persons to whom the testator did not destine them, on the ground that the purpose of the legacy was illegal. Holyoake stood for a fair combat of truth and error, on whichever side they stood, and resented all such denial of resources to propagandist associations.

In 1893, therefore, he framed a Bill to meet the injustice, and entitled it the "Civil and Religious Liberty Bill." Mr. Manfield introduced it for him in November.

The *Times* relates that there was "Opposition laughter" when Mr. (Sir Philip) Manfield gave notice of his intention, and he wrote to Holyoake :

"The deed is done ! I was horribly nervous, but got through it very well. The friends of Civil and Religious Liberty (or, I ought perhaps to say, my friends) cheered—the enemy laughed. I am afraid all this was ironical, but it is over until Tuesday, when it is down for second reading. Will you be up on Monday ? I feel I want a mentor ! Should I not say coach ?"

Manfield had succeeded Bradlaugh at Northampton—much (he says) to the irritation of Mr. Gurney—and had had little experience of speaking in the House. Even a much stronger man would hardly have been able to carry such a Bill, and it was dropped. It was, moreover, looked upon with coldness by the president of the National Secular Society, who wanted a more specifically Secularist measure. Holyoake continued to preside over the meetings of the Committee, but it seems to have dissolved, without any definite attainment, a few years before his death.

In 1896 he published his last Secularist work, *The Origin and Nature of Secularism*. The book is interesting as a presentment of his final conception of one of the chief works of his life. Two points especially are noteworthy. In the first place the reader is warned from the first page that "secular" is a very different matter from "Secularist." There seems to be some tardy recognition that his earlier ideal was too broad and vague. While "the secular neither ignores, assails, nor denies theology," he holds that "Secularism does conflict with theology." His philosophy is no longer merely a zeal for secular interests, in which the Christian may unite with the Agnostic. "What nobody seems to discern,"

he says, "is that things secular are in themselves quite distinct from Secularism." But while he has thus given a needed precision to his system, he has by no means adopted the current idea of Secularism. The purpose of his work is, he says in a sub-title of it, to show "that where Freethought commonly ends Secularism begins." His meaning, fully elucidated in the later chapters, is that Secularism is "the extension of Freethought to Ethics": not the extension of the critical method to moral conceptions, though this is necessary, but the expansion of Freethought so as to include a strong positive moral culture.

In this way his philosophy has become clearly defined and distinctly practicable. I need not enter into a discussion of the negative features of it. Suffice it to say that he accepted no Christian dogma, and not even the most attenuated shade of theism. On all these points he was a pure Agnostic, and thanked Huxley for the term. He resented the term Atheist, because most of those who would apply it to him understood it to involve a more or less dogmatic denial of the existence of a Supreme Being. Even in the forties, when he bore the name for a short time (during the editorship of the *Oracle*), he merely took it to express the fact that he was without such belief, not that he considered it could be disproved; and he almost immediately began to coin substitutes for it, such as Netheist, Limitationist, and so on.

On its positive side the last statement of his philosophy, from which he never wavered, is more interesting in that it shows advance in a practical direction. He still makes his system rest on three broad principles:

- "1. The improvement of this life by material means.
2. That science is the available Providence of man.
3. That it is good to do good."



But he now realises that this work is mainly done by "secular," as distinct from "Secularist," agencies. In the sense of those propositions, if they are not taken as exclusive, we are all Secularists to-day. Something more distinctive—something that would mark his system off from negativism on the one hand and from secular issues in general on the other—was needed, and this he finds in the cultivation of character. His position was not only a strictly logical development from the views he had expounded in Owenite halls sixty years before, but it had a place in the life about him. He saw on many sides the growth of Ethical Societies, which were understood to ignore theology and concentrate on the human cultivation of character. With these he always had cordial relations. But his Secularism, in his final conception, must "conflict with theology." On the other hand, he had seen for sixty years what might be the effect of making such conflict the whole of one's task. It involved no test of taste, or character, or culture, and unworthy types of men might be very successful at it. This defect of purely negative Secularism would be met by a positive concern for rational culture in art, science, and morality. You do not help a weak or diseased man much by simply burning his crutches. You must strengthen his limbs.

I have quoted a few interesting comments on this last Secularist volume of Holyoake's in earlier chapters. We saw that Gladstone read a hundred pages of it (out of 130) without any jarring sensation, as he put it. The comment of Dr. J. Parker also will interest many :

"MY DEAR MR. HOLYOAKE,

"I am glad to have your 'Secularism,' though I knew it all in substance long ago. Your Secularism confirms my Christianity. I have thought it not unwise or irreverent to form *some* conception of the beginning

and progress of things so far as I could get at them, and the result of all my inquiry and consideration is that I have adopted the doctrine of Jesus Christ of Nazareth as by far the best I have yet seen. Like yourself, I want to get at the truth, whatever may become of prejudice, superstition, or the glamour of old associations. I account every man orthodox who is honestly endeavouring to get at the truth, however much his conclusions may differ from mine. After carefully studying the ministry and purpose of Jesus Christ, I have no hesitation in saying that Christianity, as it is presented in the New Testament, covers more ground, answers more questions, supplies better reasons, and inspires nobler motives, than any other conception known to me. It is quite possible that the Christian case requires new definition and re-statement (I am quite sure that ecclesiastical Christianity has often done more harm than good), though I am profoundly assured that Jesus Christ himself only requires to be known to be accepted, adored, and obeyed. He will have no lazy followers, no selfish followers, no unreasoning followers; if any of his nominal followers are lazy, selfish, or unreasoning, he disowns and denounces them. This is how I read his argument and appeal. I wish we could have a long day's talk. No effort would be made on my part to make you a sectarian, but I should supremely like to show you the Christ of God as he appeals to my understanding, my heart, and my reverent imagination. You have proved your sincerity by life-long penalty nobly borne, for which reason, kindly permit me to say so, I hold your character, not in admiration only, but in grateful reverence.

" Ever sincerely yours,  
"JOSEPH PARKER."

Every letter spelt progress. This was not, in the dogmatic sense, the Joseph Parker he had encountered at Banbury fifty years before. His letter is strangely like that of Gladstone, commenting on the same book,

in its subdued note and its furtive vision of coming change. One other letter may be quoted as an indication of that wide change in religious feeling that Holyoake marked so keenly in his last decade. Amongst the men of science and letters whom he asked to lend their names to the Rationalist Press Association, in 1899, was Lord Hobhouse, who sent him the following reply :

"I have just received an appeal on behalf of a Rationalist Press Association, of which I infer that you are the prime mover. I speak of my advanced age with diffidence, because I am addressing a man whom I believe to be older than myself, and yet who is conspicuously active in promoting what he believes to be truth and justice. But my energies are fast dying out, and I feel extremely averse from joining any fresh societies or combinations. At the same time, increased length of life has continually brought to me increase of conviction that, important as is authority, tradition, or custom, for the support of our weak human nature, the free play of the most divine faculty in man, his reason, is far more essential ; and that it is very difficult to exercise, while acquiescence in use and wont is easy enough. I see, or think I see, in this generation a lazy relapse to ruder and less noble ideals of life—the military, the priestly, the autocratic ; with the consequent habit of praying to Hercules instead of putting a shoulder to the wheel, and of looking to be guided and protected by somebody else through the hard places of life instead of overcoming them by self-exertion. Those who are called Rationalists appear to me to be doing, as they have long done, very valuable work under great discouragement, by continually calling on their fellow-men to bring assertions to the test of reason and to rely on themselves."

Lord Hobhouse felt that his age prevented him from taking any active part, but he enclosed a cheque for £25. Others—notably Sir Leslie Stephen—gave their

names to the Association, and followed its work with interest. It gradually attracted so many men of ability that all danger was precluded of its ever falling into the precarious position of the earlier movements—of becoming a one-man movement—and Holyoake passed into his ninth decade of life with the feeling that, on this side also, his life-work was falling into hands that could be trusted.

## CHAPTER XXVIII

### HOLYOAKE AS A WRITER

IN the earlier chapters of this work I gave a brief analysis of, or, at least, a reference to each volume or pamphlet that Holyoake issued. It soon became clear that, if the practice were maintained throughout, the work would attain proportions that had not been contemplated. Indeed, so large a number of his smaller publications were ephemeral in their nature, and would require explanations out of proportion to their importance, that on this ground alone the practice had to be discarded. But a feeling will have grown upon the reader that, in spite of the thousands of lectures that he delivered, with all the exhausting travel that they imply, and the incessant preoccupation with committees of reform-movements, Holyoake contrived to maintain, not only a large, but an admirable literary output, and a few pages may well be devoted to this part of his activity.

A list of his publications will be found at the end of the present volume, but, although it has had the great advantage of being prepared by a special student of the matter, Mr. Goss, it would be unsafe to describe it as complete. Holyoake's literary activity covers a period of sixty-four years—almost a record in literary output—and many of his small pamphlets may very well have escaped the very careful search that has been made. Many, certainly, have quite disappeared, though some

chance reference or advertisement tells of their having been published. These are included in the list, though I have not seen them. As it is, I have read more than a hundred separate publications of his, from two-page leaflets (very few in number) to two-volume works, besides many thousands of journalistic and magazine articles. The total number of his separate publications, besides the few that may have escaped notice, is 166, three of which have two large volumes each. That is, of course, not a very large output, absolutely speaking, but when one fits it in the frame of so industrious and distracted a life it is remarkable.

Much more remarkable, however, is the range of subjects on which he wrote with effect. Religion, politics, and co-operation are the chief themes that occupied his pen, but he took journalistic licence to roam; and as a lecturer—"a pedlar in opinions," as he put it, or a purveyor of all kinds of truth from the academic workshops to the mass of the people—he was forced to cultivate variety. An enormous number of his pamphlets are reprinted journalistic articles or printed lectures. A hostile writer in a Lincoln paper a few years ago gave, in spiteful terms, some idea of the procedure:

"Mr. G. J. Holyoake is a curious survival of a past school of pre-Agnosticism. Between 1845 and 1855 he figured as a kind of diluted philosopher, who moralised on progress, as he attached himself to the fringe of advanced movements, after the manner of a fly on a wheel buzzing its satisfaction: 'How we go round.' Last year Mr. Holyoake published a book of reminiscences, entitled *Sixty Years of an Agitator's Life*, which contains some pleasant reading, if we overlook the predominance of the first personal pronoun [in an autobiography!]. In his time he has written some striking books, which to those ignorant of his personality would

lead one to suppose the author to be a much abler man than he is, although he is by no means destitute of ability. He is a born rhetorician, whose business it is to elaborate pretty sentences. For years he would lecture upon a subject until every metaphor was polished like an electro-plated proverb; then he would publish it as a booklet. The booklet was far cleverer than the man."

The conception of Holyoake as a fly on the wheels of the democratic chariot is hardly less absurd than the theory that a writer's books can be abler than himself. But the writer—if, as I see good reason to believe, it was Stewart Ross—knew something of books, and of the way in which Holyoake made them. Large numbers of his booklets, and many chapters of his more important works, made their first appearance in the form of lectures. Even in later years, when little of the lecture needed to be written in advance, he would make rough notes in a large hand on nondescript slips of paper, and amongst these one is sure to find an epigram or two. He delighted in choice phrases, rather than moving ones; and the preference suited his slight physique and quick mind. The number of these "electro-plated proverbs"—a good phrase—would grow, as he continued to give the lecture (sometimes for a year or two), and at length the whole matter would appear as an eight or sixteen-page pamphlet. Many chapters of *Sixty Years* and *Bygones*, especially those that deal with the characteristics of orators or statesmen, first took shape in this way.

I think it will hardly be disputed that, if his life had not been so crowded with propagandist work, he would have attained a high mark in literature. As it is, his works are generally entertaining and often fascinating. We have the light fluent pen of the ideal journalist, and the unflinching humour and originality that give the reader

security against dulness. I have quoted so many instances of this that even those who have not read his *Among the Americans*, or *Sixty Years*, or *Bygones*, or *History of Co-operation*, will need no further comment on it. There were few subjects except religion—and religion is not wholly an exception—that did not sparkle under his treatment. The evolution of his gift of humour is curious. One finds no trace of it in the fragments of his early diary or letters, or in the records of his earliest apostolate. The first flash that I can trace was the impetuous phrase that was rewarded with six months in Gloucester Jail, and it seems to have been in the jail that it fully developed. From that time, at all events, we find his letters and articles exhibiting the playfulness that attracts in most of his later writing.

Besides humour, he had a considerable measure of originality, generally a happy originality, that gave distinction to his pen. He tells somewhere of a printer who made an altogether ridiculous phrase out of a few words in the manuscript of one of his books. He protested that the reader's common-sense ought not to have passed such a sentence, when the man observed, quite seriously: "Well, I took it that it was one of your quaintnesses of phrase, Mr. Holyoake." He had originality of mind, as our whole story tells, and was happy in having a proportionately flexible diction. There was some truth in Dr. Collyer's saying that "nature only made one impression when he was struck off." His earliest studies were in the anatomy of thought and speech (grammar and logic)—living thought and speech, not the dead subjects of manuals of the time—and he reaped the full advantage of them. They saved him from the habit the busy journalist acquires of writing so much in conventional phrases. He always endeavoured to find time to say things in a fresh way,



without doing violence to the language, as the writer intent on originality is apt to do. When to these gifts we add a fine taste, wide and varied reading, an excellent memory, and constant intercourse with brilliant talkers, we have the elements of a good writer. But, as I have hinted, he never had the leisure or the education to become a great writer. There are passages in his later works that might be quoted as models by a teacher of letters ; but on the next page one might find a passage that would shock the teacher.

A passage that he wrote in his eighty-sixth year (*Bygones*, I, 56) runs :

"Some of the happiest evenings of [my] younger days were spent in the rooms of university students. It was pleasant to be near persons who dwelt in the kingdom of knowledge, who could wander at will on the mountain tops of science and literature, and have glimpses of unknown lands of light which I might never see. Who has seen London under the reign of the sun, after a sullen, fitful season, knows how wondrous is the transformation. Like the sheen of the gods the glittering rays descend, dispelling and absorbing the sombre clouds. A radiance rests on turret and roof. Then hidden creatures that crawl or fly come forth and put on golden tints. The cheerless poor emerge from their fireless chambers with the grateful emotions of sun-worshippers."

*Bygones Worth Remembering* was written when the shadow of death was visibly coming over him, yet it has numbers of fine passages like this, and plenty of fresh epigrams. When he recollects the proverb, "Let bygones be bygones," he retorts : "Proverbs are like plants : they have a soil and climate in which alone they flourish." Some of the best qualities of his writing are well illustrated here and there in the book. He says of

his energetic friend Joseph Cowen : " I was struck with the dexterity with which he put a word of fire into a tame sentence, infused colour into a pale-faced expression, and established a pulse in an anæmic one." Cowen's editorial pencil would have respected that sentence. It recalls his comment on Robert Owen's works : " It was said of Montaigne that his sentences were vascular and alive, and, if you pricked them, they bled. If you pricked Mr. Owen's, when he wrote on his system, you lost your needle in the wool."

*Bygones*, his last work, has a surprising vitality, optimism, and dignity in the circumstances of its production. It is, like *Sixty Years*, rather a collection of reminiscences of other people than an autobiography, though it naturally contains much autobiographic matter. Apart from the splendid cheerfulness of its close, a rare example of octogenarian optimism which I will quote later, it is chiefly distinguished and valuable for its sketches of the prominent men who had gone before him into the silence. Harriet Martineau's portraits were his admiration, and, no doubt, largely his model. " Statues sculptured from life," he calls them. They are " not like the false eulogies of the dead, which, by pretending perfection, lie to the living, where silence on errors or deficiencies are of the nature of deceit." The ungrammatical "are" reminds us of his limitations; for a grammarian he slumbered too often. But he was as capable as Harriet Martineau of good and true characterisation. Of Bradlaugh he finely says :

"The coarse environments of his early life lent imperiousness to his manners. In later years, when he was in the society of equals, where masterfulness was less possible and less necessary, he acquired courtesy and a certain dignity—the attribute of conscious power. He was the greatest agitator, within the limits of the law,

who appeared in my time among the working people. . . . That from so low a station he should have risen so high, and, after reaching the very platform of his splendid ambition, should die in the hour of his opportunity of triumph, was one of the tragedies of public life that touched the heart of the nation, in whose eyes Mr. Bradlaugh had become a commanding figure."

Nothing juster has been written of Bradlaugh; and this was written immediately after his daughter had made a severe attack on Holyoake. Gladstone, Mazzini, Mill, Newman, Spencer, Cowen, G. Eliot, and Harriet Martineau are drawn just as well, and from personal knowledge. Of Gladstone's conversation he says: "It was like an oration in miniature; its exactness, its modulation, its force of expression, its foreseeingness of all the issues, came at will."

His chapter on Disraeli is biased, but one of the best in the book. He compares him with Lassalle, with the same audacity with which he compares Gladstone with Voltaire. The only contrast he notices is that, while both issued a challenge to a duel, "Disraeli had the prudence to challenge Daniel O'Connell, who, he knew, was under a vow not to fight one." "He was capable of serving any party, but preferred the party that could best serve him." It is tantalising that he includes no chapter on Chamberlain. It must have been one of his disappointments that he died too soon to pen one.

*Bygones* was a further instalment of recollections, given in answer to the popular craving engendered by *Sixty Years*. Its earlier chapters have the weakness of such supplementary works, but the convenient death of so many people he had known gave him fresh opportunities. "You would make an article out of your grandmother," T. B. Potter once wrote him in playful impatience. It would have had the excuse of being interesting. Father

- ✓ Bernard Vaughan once defined oratory as "the art of saying most about least." Holyoake's pen was familiar with that art, though there is usually substance in his chapters. He had the eighteenth-century gift of writing an essay on a broom-stick, or something equally arid to the common writer, and making his reader go through every line. "The light, firm touch and quiet epigram would make the dullest subject readable," George H. Lewes said, after reading one of his books.

*Sixty Years* was written in the maturity of his power. I need say little of it, partly because I have inserted so many phrases and passages as we proceeded, partly because every reader of this chapter will have read it. The charm of the work is not by any means due solely to the series of romantic episodes and characters it recalls. "This is a book before which criticism finds itself disarmed," one of its chief reviewers observed. No book of recollections was ever better worth writing, and not many of recent years have been better written. Terse-ness, ease, and humour are remarkably combined in his style. The only chapter we could dispense with is the first, in which he expounds his excuses for writing the book. His defects of training peep out at times—as in the sentence: "George Cruikshank was one whom, when Jerrold saw him enter the committee-room, exclaimed," etc.—but the work abounds in qualities that no training could have given. "I had some instinct of art," he says, quaintly enough. "I admired Robespierre—not on account of principles ascribed to him, but because he used one-sized paper, and wrote out himself all his speeches in a large and careful hand. No one can do that without detecting verbiage, irrelevance, and limp-ness of expression. But, though I knew the plan to be good, I never had time to follow it." The two pages that follow this (in ch. xxvi) are sufficient proof of his

"instinct for art." But the work has obtained recognition in its class, and is well known. When David Masson read every word of it, less voracious readers will have gone through it more than once.

These two works are, as I said, largely made up of earlier lectures and articles, and any who cares to turn back to the *Reasoner* and *Chronicle* can trace the improvement of his qualities. From his earliest articles in the *Oracle* he was clear, terse, epigrammatic, and uncommon; though he was never oracular. Most of his readers would say that he was saved from this by his sense of modesty; I should prefer to say, by his sense of taste. Refinement was his first quality; humour the second. So his dangerous originality never degenerated into eccentricity, but remained usefully fertile in suggesting titles, of which he was prodigal.

It would involve too much repetition to run over the general classes of his publications. I may recall only that the largest class—his Co-operative works and essays—have two defects, from the literary point of view. The chief one is the inability, or want of time, to fit his material into a symmetrical frame—in chronological or some other natural order. The historian or biographer should build after the manner of the modern American architect. He must first erect the steel frame of his structure, and then fill it in, carefully concealing it, with his material. Holyoake had—he prided himself on this—the keen instinct of the journalist to get at facts, which gives great value to his historical and biographical work; and he could put art and brightness into what threatened to be the dullest chapter, as he went along. But he had the corresponding defect of a lack of large and comprehensive arrangement. It must also be borne in mind that the familiar edition of his *History of Co-operation* was issued, and partly written, in his extreme old age, with

failing power and dimness of eye. What I call the other defect is only such from the purely literary point of view : it is the defect of a quality. His propagandist ardour for profit-sharing is too insistent. However, most of these works *are* propagandist, and the ardour will be accounted a virtue. His six histories of Co-operation (early history, general history, histories of the Rochdale, Leeds, and Derby Societies, and *Co-operation To-day*) form one of the most solid pieces of work he has left behind ; and his biographies—R. Owen, Hetherington, R. Stephens, R. Carlile, T. Cooper, and Mill, besides articles in the *Dictionary*—will be used by historians. And, apart from his historical labours, all his literary resources have been generously used for sixty years in presenting the Co-operative principle. That involves repetition, yet there is amazing freshness even in his latest pamphlets, such as *Essentials of Co-operative Education*.

Of his early educational works it is not necessary to say much. They must be judged by their age (1840-1852). In that age they were excellent, for he was an able and—what was rarer—an enlightened teacher of the young, and some of them are still of advantage. His *Co-operative Movement To-day* is read, by official instruction, in the schools of Canada to-day. Wendell Phillips made a manual of his *Public Speaking and Debate*, and Dr. Parker contributed to circulate it in our time.

His political writings are slight, but the Liberal historian will find their effect without a microscopic scrutiny of the life of the nineteenth century. Early booklets such as *Organisation not of Arms, but of Ideas*, helped considerably to turn the workers from Chartism to Radicalism, and so to build up the force of modern Liberalism from the extremes of Whiggery and Anarchy. Many a later pamphlet hit its mark ; notably, the

*Liberal Situation, New Defence of the Ballot, Working-class Representation, and Patriotism by Charity.* In many other matters he helped the cause of sober progress—temperance, the Sunday opening of museums, public executions, emigration, trades unions, international exhibitions, bribery,<sup>1</sup> etc. On all these questions he wrote pamphlets, and his terse, arresting style must have given them influence. I know only one pamphlet of his that wholly missed its mark. This was a curious reprint from the *Newcastle Chronicle*, with the title *A Suppressed Princess*, which he issued (under the name of "Landor Praed") in 1863. It was an appeal on behalf of the "Princess of Cumberland" (Mrs. Ryves), whom he found living in the "stuccoey and prosaic streets of Camden Town." His vindication of her marriage to the Duke of Cumberland was formidable, but it proved almost the only forlorn cause of the many desperate ones his pamphlets advocated.

The subject of religion naturally classifies a very large number of his books and pamphlets, but, after the preceding chapter, we need not dwell on them. The most serious and ample exposition of his critical opinions is found in his *Trial of Theism* (1858). The later large work, the *Origin and Nature of Secularism*, is scrappy and unsatisfactory in argument, but will be found the easiest and latest *statement* of his whole philosophy. A little pamphlet, the *Logic of Death*, that has been reprinted of late years, will give the best idea of the vigour and ability with which he faced ultimate problems in his maturity. It is a fine piece of writing. In later years his religious pamphlets lack nerve, because he held that ultimate problems did not properly come—one way or the other—within the range of the Secularist. During

<sup>1</sup> It may be noted here that he was the originator of the name "Jingoes." All controversy has ended in the recognition of this.

the half century between the two larger books he wrote only a few slight pamphlets on theology. Most of these were directed at securing the abolition of the compulsory oath, and here again his work was successful. His anti-theological criticisms are—apart from the *Trial of Theism*—buried for the most part in anti-theological journals.

The heterogeneous remainder of his literary output has no importance. It consists of journalistic comments on questions of the hour, and the titles give explanation enough. What I have said will enable any reader to look intelligently over the bibliography at the close. It will be seen that his reading was almost confined to economics, politics, and religion. History he knew well only in so far as it bore on these; in other words, he was thoroughly familiar with the history of England, if not of Europe, in the nineteenth century, but went little beyond this. A cognate limitation hampered him in his unfamiliarity with foreign tongues. His Latin and Greek studies were stricken prematurely by political blasts, and his French was always elementary. Of science he had little knowledge, in spite of his early bent and his close acquaintance with so many distinguished scientists—Spencer, Huxley, Tyndall, Bain, I. Roberts, Sir M. Foster, etc. Its enormous expansion during his lifetime put it beyond the reach of his slender opportunities. For many years he attended and followed eagerly the early meetings of the British Association, but he had soon to be content to admire its progress at a distance. Of philosophy proper he knew nothing later than Mill, Hamilton, and Mansel. The bloodless abstractions of metaphysics had no power to lure him from the throbbing problems of actual life, and he had little faculty for them.

With good literature he was very much better



acquainted. He had read most of the finer eighteenth-century writers—Sterne was the model he recommended to young men—and all that appeared in his own age. His native taste for such reading was reinforced by his wide acquaintance with men of letters : to have known, in greater or less degree, W. S. Landor, S. Butler, George Eliot, G. H. Lewes, Mrs. Lynn Linton, H. Martineau, Browning, Ruskin, Tennyson, Gladstone, and Morley was an education. His own humour and epigrammatic turn gave him a fine selective instinct in reading, and his memory was remarkably good. He was thus able to add a further distinction to his lectures and writings by pleasing quotations and anecdote. He kept, indeed, bundles of the nondescript bits of paper on which he used to scribble notes—I have found lecture notes written on the back of the ornamental leaf of a cigar-box—with striking passages jotted down as he read, to be used when opportunity came. Good as his memory was, he did not trust to it to find again the gem he had noticed in his author. It was dug out at once, and placed in his orderly collection.

He had in a very large degree the “art to conceal his art.” The man who wrote of his much-polished epigrams knew something of his methods. He could say very apt and striking things extempore, but his reader is generally misled in thinking that the book or article has flowed smoothly and swiftly from his pen. Even his letters were often written twice, and were cut down and corrected most laboriously. Most of the pleasant friendly notes I have quoted, or will quote in the next chapter, were tossed off in a breath ; but of the more important letters I have quoted I have had before me a first copy, scored and blackened with alterations. It is curious that it is only in the matter of these letters that he over-elaborated his writing. They tend to become stiff and

pedantic. His spontaneous writing (of a letter) was better. But he had so often to write letters on which the tranquillity and progress of a great cause more or less depended that he took time. It was then that he looked up to the placid portrait of Talleyrand hanging in his room, a constant rebuke to zeal and impetuosity. It would have been better for their causes if some of his colleagues had done the same.

His journalistic work had often to be done hurriedly, and in the romantic circumstances that reporting entails. He tells somewhere of allowing a small man that stood before him in a crowd to stand on his (Holyoake's) toes, to see better, while Holyoake wrote his copy on the shorter man's hat. His long railway journeys were very often spent in journalistic work. "If you write like this in the train, what will you do in your study?" a northern editor, who had just offered him an engagement, said to him. Even to enumerate the journals he wrote in, from his early articles in the *Leeds Times* under Samuel Smiles, would occupy pages. He served more than sixty years in that profession. As a reporter he had few equals, and his complete knowledge of the nineteenth century gave value to his later articles. Still, some of his finest articles are contained in the earliest papers he wrote for.<sup>1</sup> As an editor he was admirable, and unsuccessful. He founded and edited eighteen journals at different times—I have noticed each in its age—and eleven of these did not reach a twelfth issue. The *Reasoner* was his one success, and this never had value as property. The failure was due, of course, to the circumstance that his journals generally appealed to a small heterodox group, and that even in this small world he generally had rivals who declined to be hampered

<sup>1</sup> It is noteworthy that he wrote a weekly letter to the *Birmingham Weekly Post* for about twenty years—until it became *Unionist*.

by considerations of culture and taste. The *English Leader* and the *Present Day* were broader in their aim, but they retained an outspokenness in regard to theology that restricted their circulation. Where Thornton Hunt, with his brilliant staff and slighter heresy, failed, Holyoake was not likely to succeed ; and the one opening for him in the editorial world was with a free, unattached journal.

I have said that his writing grew out of his lecturing to a great extent. It would, in one sense, be more correct to say that his literary qualities gave success to his lectures. The forms of public speaking he cultivated in a high degree, because he came of an age when there was a far greater zeal for such cultivation. It was no accident that English public life had ten times as many powerful speakers between 1830 and 1870 as in the next forty years (if we assign Gladstone and Bright to the earlier period). The average standard of speaking was proportionately higher. There was more fire in the themes of the time, more enthusiasm in the mass of hearers, and more training in aspirants to the platform. As an early aspirant Holyoake studied declamation, and acquired ease and dignity of bearing. But he never had the robustness that a great speaker needs. Since this can be very largely acquired, it is curious that he never cured his voice of its thinness. He was at his best in speaking to small audiences of cultivated men and women, and I have often admired the striking aptness of his diction and fluency of his delivery on such occasions. For larger audiences his voice had not the resonance that impresses, and his fineness and subtlety were lost on them to a great extent. He had passion and a command of the orator's imagery, but was not an orator. He lacked the power, and he sought to convince rather than to move.

In later years he would scribble only a few rough notes, with a few terse sentences completed, in preparation for his most important addresses. The notes lie before me of the very fine address he gave at the Hall of Science the Sunday after Bradlaugh's death. Any reader who may have listened to it will be surprised to hear that the notes are a dozen slips of rough waste paper, with two or three lines scribbled on each in a large hand. But his subject was on such occasions well meditated. Much of what he said on Bradlaugh reappears in his literary appreciations. A deaf man would, I imagine, have concluded that he was a great orator. For those who had ears the voice was too thin and nervous. His voice carried well, however, and he could be heard throughout large buildings. But, apart from Co-operative meetings, where the function attracted the crowd, he rarely had very large audiences to address, in the later years of his life. He chose throughout life to appeal, by voice and pen, to the workers, who needed help, and his fineness was beyond them. The limitation was theirs.

## CHAPTER XXIX

### A CHEERFUL OCTOGENARIAN

THE last decade of his life found Holyoake only little less active than the preceding one. The illness of 1894 and 1895 had indeed reduced his strength, but he nursed it with care, and still employed it in human service. He continued his journalistic work until the year of his death. He presided at the meetings of the Travelling Tax Committee until 1902, and maintained his attendance at the Newspaper Board at Manchester, the councils of the Co-Partnership movement, International Alliance, Rationalist Press Committee, Liberty of Bequest Committee, and the Co-operative Congress and Crystal Palace Festival until 1904.

Indeed, his diary for 1897, his eightieth year, is a remarkable octogenarian document. In that year he wrote, at some pressure, his history of the Leeds Society, edited a little work for a friend (*The Path I Took*), and began to set in order the "fifty years of confusion" in his book-room for the purpose of writing further reminiscences. He attended nearly all the meetings of the committees to which he belonged, and spoke at many functions that were now annual events in his calendar—the Gladstone and the postmen's dinner at Brighton, the Rationalist Press dinner at London, the Secular anniversary at Leicester, and others. He co-operated vigorously with the International Peace Association on the Cretan trouble, and spoke at the Bradlaugh

celebration in the autumn. In September he went to Holland for the International Congress, at which he spoke twice, and made a visit to Paris on his return. He rarely lectured now, but in many other respects his work increased.

One of the chief reasons for his continued activity was the cheerful optimism with which he surveyed the life of the world about him. He was singularly free from the moroseness and pessimism that so often cloud the last years of active men. Old friends and colleagues wrote him in senescent phrases about the perversity of things, but he himself was irrepressibly buoyant and confiding. A few letters to a Southport friend (Mr. W. Ashton) may be taken as typical of his personal letters at this time :

"When a friend asked Douglas Jerrold if he had a mind to lend him a guinea, he answered that he had the mind, but not the guinea. I have the mind to write you a hundred pages, but I have not the time to. The paper is excellent, but 'too good,' as Wordsworth said of woman, 'for human nature's daily food'—of ideas. I pray for blessings for all of you on the mountains."

Near Christmas-time he writes :

"What could have put it into your friendly head to send me a succulent, life-giving, Festive Turkey? It is not only an inducement to, it is a condition of living. . . . Yours in season, and out of season."

"I congratulate you on having had the influenza," he writes again. "If it has had the same effect upon all your household, Glengariff must be delightful. You never wrote a letter so bright, or so sustained in its humour."

Old friends like W. Morrison and Goldwin Smith were trying to infect him with querulousness, but they had

little success. Only in regard to the Boer war does any shade come over his letters. Memorial cards were pouring upon him weekly. Gladstone and Collet died in 1898, Ingersoll in 1899, Hollick in 1900. He could now count on the fingers of one hand the survivors of the heroic forties. For such of them as were dying in straitened circumstances he begged guineas from his friends. He had by strategy to force assistance on Truelove, and he helped G. J. Harney and the widow of Ernest Jones. He even, as we shall see, appealed to Mr. Carnegie to establish a fund to meet such cases. For himself life was still sweet and generous enough. He never had a large income, but the magazines and journals were always open to him, and his pen was still bright and active. His home was as pleasant to him as any mansion could have been. It was crowded with memorials of his career and tokens of regard. The faces of fellow-actors in many a stirring drama looked on him from every wall—Owen, Carlile, Cowen, Orsini, Garibaldi, Gladstone, Wendell Phillips, Ingersoll, Stuart Mill, Spencer, and so many others. One of Colonel Macerone's pikes of 1831 stood in a corner; two Garibaldian flags were reverently folded in a drawer (and hung from the window on gala days). Well might he be optimistic, if not a little proud. Every struggle these trophies bore witness to had succeeded. He had got beyond the slopes of Pisgah, at least. A friend one day sent him a cutting from a daily, relating how Edward VII. had affectionately greeted the President of the French Republic, while the band played the Marseillaise. Few readers would see any philosophy in it, but those two old men did. "Shade of Rouget de Lisle!" his friend exclaims.

The story of his remaining years is one that can be told best by correspondence. His quiet influence on the cause of Co-operation is expressed by the scores of letters

he still receives from all parts. "I hope that in the near future you will send some Co-operative propagandists to Japan," an official writes him from the Home Office at Tokyo. English journals and magazines asked him incessantly for articles on Co-operation. *Commerce* sent a representative to interview him. He was now active also in the International Peace Association, and was nominated as a delegate to St. Petersburg. "If I look as well when I am 60 as you do when you are 83," Mr. Stead wrote him, "I shall consider myself lucky. Had you been half your age, you could not have displayed more vigour, more vitality, and more of the qualities which make a Chairman [at their dinner in 1899] the centre and soul of the meeting over which he presides." "I wish we had a thousand Holyoakes," Mr. Hodgson Pratt wrote. But Holyoake wisely refused to tempt the fates by a journey to Russia. "Age has imposed on me," he wrote to Mr. Stead, "not a lessened love of adventure, but a lessened power of activity." He must have hesitated, for all his old ardour was aflame in the cause of peace, in which he was deeply interested in his last decade.

In 1898 he took the chair for a lecture by the Rev. Dr. Lorrimer at the Westbourne Park Institute, and contracted some friendship with Dr. Clifford. His older Free Church friend, Dr. Parker, was drawing near the end. "Always believe," Dr. Parker wrote him in September 1899, "in my deep personal interest in everything that concerns you, and my heartiest desire that all good and comfortable things may attend your life. For myself I am so lonesome and miserable at times as to be no longer a Christian; but the light will come." It is quaint to read the Secularist consoling the divine:

"What you say of yourself," Holyoake replied, "I could not read without concern. Depression is desolation, as I well know. In my younger days it often came



to me from physical exhaustion. Sorrow and fatigue have brought it to you. Time, rest, and defiant abandonment, tempered by the thought how great the calamity might be, and thankfulness for good that without self-merit had come, are the only mitigations I know."

They were cordial to the end, and after Parker's death (and that of Hugh Price Hughes) Holyoake wrote his appreciation of both in a small pamphlet with the title *Two Great Preachers*.

A letter to Justin McCarthy in 1899 has some interest :

"Ever since I read in your fascinating volume of 'Reminiscences' your description of myself, I have had it in my mind to thank you. It is by far the most discerning I have ever seen, and exactly describes my view of things—limited. My mind is like a commercial company, 'Limited' in its responsibility for the existence of things unknown. Thank you for the generosity of your useful and defensive thought of me."<sup>1</sup>

"Your letter gave me the most genuine delight," Mr. McCarthy answered. "I wrote of you exactly as I felt and as I knew, and I am glad to find that my portrait is recognised as a likeness by its subject."

At this time Holyoake was himself writing his further volumes of reminiscences. He wrote also a history of the Derby Co-operative Society, and a lengthy preface for Collet's *History of the Taxes on Knowledge*, for which he had

<sup>1</sup> In the course of a long reference to Holyoake, Mr. McCarthy had said: "George Jacob Holyoake I have known for much more than a quarter of a century, and have been concerned with him in many a movement for political and social reform. I have not known a man of more unselfish purpose or more philanthropic aim. He might fairly be described, like Leigh Hunt's Abou Ben Adhem, as 'one who loved his fellow man.' He has suffered all manner of penalties again and again, because he would not pretend to have a certain belief when he had it not. His influence among the working classes, for whom he wrought and sacrificed so much, has always been a wise and moderating influence."

some work to find a publisher. Several of the London journals subscribed in the end to defray the cost of publishing it. The proprietor of the *Athenæum* wrote him, when the book appeared (in 1899) :

“ I do indeed value much your kind reference to my dear father. What you have written is just like yourself—full of generosity. You are ever ready to praise others, and to recognise their labours. I do hope your own work for the public good will never be forgotten. I know this, that so long as I live I shall do my small part to keep it in remembrance.”

A little later Holyoake wrote to Mr. Francis :

“ The days have been so dark we feared we should not be able to see the shortest day when it came. But on any day your beautiful present would light up the room.”

He had reached the twentieth century with no diminution of cheerfulness. His mind darkened only when he looked toward the southern horizon, and thought of South Africa, but otherwise his letters were so bright that correspondents address him as “ My dear young friend.” On a particularly bad day he wrote :

“ January 23rd,  
“ Zero year.

“ DEAR ASHTON,

“ Alas, we meet not now. Weather bad. Pressure from Derby for their History. The wedding on hand. My mind is sodden with the rain. I have not a dry idea in my head. My conversation is damp, and would give you influenza.

“ Yours all the same.”

But his life was brightened every few days by some valued greeting. On January 27th a wire came from

Scotland (as it often did): "Your health was enthusiastically drunk to-night by a hundred Scottish Burns Club Co-operators, and they send you greeting and good love." In May, however, he again met with a nasty accident, and friends were concerned. He was summoned to London to speak at the cremation of his old friend, Dr. G. Bird, when he was knocked down in avoiding a crowd at London Bridge Station. The most painful part of it to him seems to have been that the crowd was there to do honour to the Naval Brigade on its return from South Africa. His own account of the matter to a friend runs:

"To avoid being forced by the crowd off the platform, I turned into a fenced-off space, where some impediment I did not notice threw me down. The first thing I saw was the new hat I had been cautioned not to spoil the first day of wearing it, rolling along the ground. I was raised, bruised and bleeding at one hand. I was advised to sit down on a seat kindly vacated for me, but I thought I had been down sufficiently. A police officer was directed to see me into a cab. . . . In my damaged state I resembled one of the wounded from South Africa; but as yet I have heard nothing of a pension—not even a mention by Lord Roberts."

He was writing this letter a week after the accident. When he got to the end of his account he went out for a walk, and was immediately knocked down by a cyclist. The man had to choose between running down Holyoake or a lady, and "as I have always favoured the rights of women," he went on in the second part of his letter, "I did not complain; though I may complain of the bruises on the right side, arm and hand, before the left side was well." He had long ceased to be indignant with such assailants. Colliding with a man in Fleet Street one day, he turned round and said: "If it was my fault, I

apologise : if yours, I pardon you." A few weeks after the second accident we find him attending the International Alliance Congress at Paris.

"Many happy returns of the day to the Grand Old Man of English Free Thought," Mr. Frederic Harrison wrote, on his eighty-fourth birthday. "May you continue to keep alive the flame of republican honesty in these degenerate days." Holyoake was not so ready to admit that they were degenerate days, with all his memory of the enthusiasm of the thirties and forties. In the summer he sent the appeal to Mr. Carnegie that I mentioned previously.

"There is," he wrote, "an order of men—'extinct volcanoes,' as Disraeli would call them—who die one by one unregarded and unfriended. I refer to those men who perish through caring for others more than for themselves—a disease of which not many die. It is their nature never to rest while injustice is done, or preventable suffering exist within their ken. These men go out on the forlorn hope of thought on which few will venture. . . . An endowment where such persons might end their days in comfort, free from precariousness, would be a noble provision. Such persons are an Insurance Society of Betterment, of which they themselves pay the premium, and the public reaps the advantage. Such a remnant of Decayed Publicists would teem with interest and instruction."

In a letter to Mr. Morley, asking his influence, he suggested a small fund, to begin with, that would give £20 a year to ten persons. Mr. Carnegie had reminded him of "Bulwer's home for Decayed Authors" and other failures, and preferred the idea of a pension fund. The "idea was splendid," he said, and he gave hope of seeing it realised. All appreciated the generous action of Holyoake in so thinking of less successful workers amidst his own wealth of friends and comparative ease. Holyoake

himself was by no means a "decayed publicist." That year (1901) he edited the *Sun* for a week at the invitation of Mr. Bottomley (a relative), and well earned the largest journalistic fee he ever received. When his work was over the *Sun* had a leader on "The late editor's body-guard."

"As soon as it became known that Mr. George Jacob Holyoake, the veteran apostle of free speech, a free press, and reform, was to occupy the editorial chair of the *Sun*, it was found necessary to guard the editorial sanctum, even against his old friends, who were anxious once more to look into his sunny face and grasp his hand. It was felt that the crowding-in of his old admirers, together with the week's editorial labours necessary to the production of a great daily paper with six, and sometimes eight editions a day, would be at the risk of his health. . . . I have been amazed at his clearness of perception, accurate judgment, discrimination, and prompt decision in deciding upon the suitability or unsuitability of articles for the columns of the *Sun*. The leading articles which have appeared from his pen have been decided upon and written within the hour, and the brief seasons during the day which have been assigned to him for rest have been occupied by him in the preparation of articles (30 in all) for other departments of the *Sun*."

He had been restored to general notice two months before by Mr. Stead, who made him the subject of his "character-sketch" (September, 1901), at the suggestion of Mr. W. Ashton. "My only difficulty," Mr. Stead wrote, "is the impossibility of getting a full-length sketch of you and all that you have done into the narrow compass of the space at my disposal." The sketch was a fine one. "It is probable," it concluded, "that there is no other man of eighty-four now living in this country who has so honourable a record." Mindful always of old colleagues, he was at that time setting

afoot a movement for some tribute to E. O. Greening ; and I find a letter from Mr. Gray acknowledging his kindness "in sending me the beautiful birthday gift which was so unexpected and will be so much prized. . . . When I have done with it, I shall hand it down with pride to my son, and tell him to treasure it in remembrance of you and your great work." He was also collecting subscriptions in this country for the American memorial to Colonel Ingersoll.

The year 1902 found him as buoyant and inspiring as ever. The advertisement of a lecture to be given by him at Lewes gives as the title :

"Of 'Good Old Times' let others prate—  
I thank my stars that I was born so late."

But it was no idle optimism that he advocated, and although in this year his attendance at committees began to fail, he lent his name to several fresh enterprises. He became President of the National Democratic League, and Vice-president of the Land Nationalisation Society. "You'll never grow old," Mr. W. Digby wrote him. "You may pass into another form of existence, but such vivacity, such virility, such force, and such biting sarcasm cannot perish." "You certainly are wonderful, and your brain is as vigorous as ever," Mr. W. Morrison exclaims. These were congratulations on his eighty-sixth birthday. The members of the South Place Chapel arranged a reception for him in honour of that event, and I recall the wonder of the great throng of admirers at his geniality, force, and dignity.

A letter from Lady Florence Dixie—a warm friend of his later years—that reached him on this occasion will be read with interest :

"Mrs. C. F. Smith kindly asked me to be present at the reception on your birthday. I wish it were possible.

. . . When I was a little girl I heard your praises sung at a large dinner party at Harleyford by my grandfather, Gen. Sir W. R. Clayton, my mother's father,<sup>1</sup> who was a great admirer of yours. 'Ijain' [Lady Dixie] was then six, and was seated on Disraeli's knee for dessert, eating almonds and raisins, and listening very attentively to the discussion of your merits and demerits. She sympathised with her grandfather's estimate of you, and, when Mr. Disraeli did not, she put up a tiny hand to his cheek and, pulling his face round, said: 'Mr. Disraeli, Ijain likes Mr. Holyoake too.'

Lady Dixie presented to the Rationalist Press Library a fine oil-portrait of Holyoake by his nephew. Another interesting letter that was read during the reception at South Place was from Herbert Spencer. Holyoake and he had seen much of each other at Brighton. They often drove or walked together, or discussed the universe together in the interstices of a game of billiards at Spencer's house. The aged philosopher was unable to attend at South Place, and he wrote:

"I can do nothing more than express my warm feeling of concurrence. Not dwelling upon his intellectual capacity, which is high, I would emphasise my appreciation of his courage, sincerity, truthfulness, philanthropy, and unwearied perseverance. Such a combination of these qualities it will, I think, be difficult to find."

Spencer himself was "slowing down into the station." A little later, when Holyoake sent him quiet birthday congratulations, he answered: "Thanks for your congratulations: but I should have liked better your condolences on my longevity." Him, too, Holyoake saw pass before him under the dark arch.

<sup>1</sup> Readers of *Ijain* may care to know that Lady Dixie observes in a note that "Marleyford" stands for Harleyford, and "Sir R. Railton" for General Clayton, in that story.

In the summer of 1902 he unveiled the monument that the Co-operators of England had raised over the grave of Robert Owen, and gave a noble address on the great reformer. Owen's grand-daughter (Rosamond Owen-Templeton) wrote him : "A faithful love is a beautiful thing, and you have loved my dear grandfather most faithfully." Later he gave assistance to Mr. Podmore in writing his *Life of R. Owen*, and, after a keen and protracted search, he unearthed a valuable quantity of Owen letters (3,000 in number) which he handed over to the Owen Memorial Committee, in whose hands they still await publication. When he wrote to approve Sir Leslie Stephen's article on Owen in the *Dictionary*, Sir Leslie replied : "I am glad that any writings of mine have been approved by so competent a judge, but I also feel ashamed that a man who has done so much active and strenuous work as you should give generous praise to me, who can only claim to be a literary looker-on. I ought to honour the real labourer, not to receive honour from him." I believe, however, that Holyoake resented the masterly phrase in which Stephen describes Owen as "one of those intolerable bores who are the salt of the earth."

In 1903 he unveiled a portrait of Mr. Hodgson Pratt, by Mr. Moscheles (who also painted Holyoake's portrait), at the Working Men's Club, and dwelt at length and generously on his social services. "I have given you no excuse for your generous pronouncement," Mr. Pratt wrote him, "but I am glad to think the working men had once more an opportunity of hearing your delightful eloquence." Later in the year he gave an address in the Rochdale Unitarian Church ; and in December a visit of Lord and Lady Brassey inspired him with one of his original ideas. "The Primrose League," he wrote, "is obsolete, unhistoric, waxworky, and inane. Why should



not Lady Brassey found a Mayflower League? That would be pretty, pertinent, historic, and inspiring. The Mayflower went out in search of liberty." "It is an inspiring suggestion," Lord Brassey replied.

With the beginning of 1904 his fresh chapters of reminiscences began to appear in the *Weekly Times and Echo*, and were then published as *Bygones*. I have already commented on the work, but the last chapter (which appeared in the *Fortnightly* at the end of 1903) is interesting here as an indication of his social optimism. It is one long and valuable appreciation of modern times in contrast to the old days he remembered so well. He never listened with patience to the phrase "good old times." He knew them. "The past had its evils; the present has fewer," was his sober verdict. His detailed contrast of the two extremes of the age he lived through has great value. Few of his elderly colleagues—Mr. Greening, Mr. Passmore Edwards, and Mr. H. Pratt were fine exceptions—saw such a bright sunset. Hodgson Pratt sent him two anecdotes to confirm his optimism. He had in his youth attended the Bath Grammar School, in the early days of Radicalism. "One morning, before the masters came in, all the desks were flung open as I entered, so that the inner side of the lids could be seen. On each appeared the following words in large letters: 'Down with Radicals—they stink.'" On another occasion his father (a Unitarian) was canvassing for Roebuck, and solicited for him the vote of the family shoemaker. The man exclaimed: "What! Vote for 'im! 'E don't believe in God nor devil."

"Some millionaire will be offering you a million for the secret of youthfulness," Mr. Greening wrote him, as his eighty-seventh birthday came round. Only three days afterwards Holyoake fell to the ground in a sudden attack of vertigo. But the warning was little heeded.

In January he had pressed Mr. Chamberlain to remit the tax that still remained on first-class railway fares. In March he appears in the new character of a "Passive Resister." "Cat and roses seized for priest-rates," he gaily notes in his diary. His picture was put up at auction, and he took the opportunity to make a speech there against the education-rate (on its religious side), and afterwards lectured on the subject to a small crowd on the open beach. He attended his last Co-operative Congress in May, and was elected a director of the Co-operative Newspaper Society. In June he made a speech at a meeting in honour of Paine, and the summer passed pleasantly, and with promise. In the autumn—ominously enough—the few notes scrawled in his diary are often upside down. His eyes were failing again. And year by year death was thinning the circle of his old friends. In 1904 it was the turn of Dr. Thomasson and Dr. Isaac Roberts.

Dr. Roberts was an assiduous correspondent of his during the few years before his death, and a few letters from him and others in 1904 are of interest. Dr. Roberts shared Holyoake's feeling in regard to theology. When Holyoake condoled with him on the death of his wife in 1901, he replied :

"We seem to be now as ever the playthings of some Being that permits us to blunder into the maximum of discomfort in life, and at the end has arranged that we must return to the state of unconscious atoms such as we were in before we were born. What is designated Revelation only makes darkness darker."

A few months before his death he wrote to Holyoake :

"MY DEAR JACOB HOLYOAKE,

"It is a pleasure to me to hear from and of you. I also know, by long experience and by reading, that

our aims in life are, and have in the past been, to acquire knowledge of ourselves first and knowledge of mankind in all its varied ramifications concurrently. . . . What would we do if we had the power? (1) Extend our lives in full physical health, strength, and vigour from this day onward to the year 3004. (2) Endow ourselves with vital force that would react, automatically, upon the human race, and cause them, during their respective span of life, to do NO EVIL either to themselves or to any other sentient being. (3) Make laws that would, immediately on the commission of an evil act, punish the transgressor in strict proportion to its magnitude, and give compensation to the injured without delay—the laws would be as the laws of nature. Imagine the torrent of invective that would flow upon us from every hole and corner throughout Christendom for daring to suggest such a simple remedy for evil!!”

Lord Hobhouse was another constant correspondent who shared Holyoake's views on religious questions. From 1899 onward he wrote many long and strong expressions of his feeling, though he was unwilling to have his name publicly linked with the Rationalist Press Association, which he materially aided. The attitude of the clergy during the war much embittered him. “With exceptions lamentably few,” he wrote, “they are tramping along the broad and easy road laid down by the strong, the rich, and the excitable multitude. It would seem that there are few except the despised Rationalists and Agnostics to maintain that the moral law is the same for nations as for individuals.” But his rejection of theology had other than sentimental grounds, as the letter I quoted earlier indicates. He hardly shared Holyoake's optimism, but greatly admired him, and enjoyed his letters. “You infuse,” he said, “so beneficial an energy into men's thoughts that I cannot help hoping you may still have before you much time in which to

work." For his own part he had "sat long enough at the feast of life, and, though not very impatient for the end, was ready for it." He corresponded with Holyoake until his death, in 1904.

Earl Grey's correspondence with him increased in his later years. The knowledge that so able a statesman was not merely interested in Co-operative matters, but a zealous advocate of co-partnership, gave him great comfort. In 1900 he wrote to Holyoake :

"DEAR MR. HOLYOAKE,

"Your inscription, to be pasted into your history of the Derby Society, gives the volume a greatly increased value. There is an originality about your handwriting, and a refreshing even if too flattering courtesy about your phraseology, which give a peculiar charm to your manuscript.

"Now let me take you into my confidence *re* a work of art which is being made for me, and which, when finished, will give in a manner worthy of your life's work and of your hopes *your* message to the world. My artist friend is putting his whole energy into the effort to show, in a manner so clear that everyone will understand, the difference between the selfishness, ignorance, and tyranny of the old industrial system and the beauty of the new. At the base of the plaque, modelled in bronze, Capital, which is represented by a powerful autocrat, Michel-Angelesque in power and authority, is driving mercilessly blind slaves, who are harnessed to his chariot by chains. The road is strewn with the corpses of the fallen, and those who are endeavouring to raise themselves and looking towards the light are being thrust down by another incarnation of capital, a masterful and pitiless giant, admirably executed. Above this representation of the mercilessness of capital and the sufferings of labour is a great dragon, symbolical of the ignorance which blinds the eyes of the capitalist and slave.

"Then the artist endeavours to convey the idea of the

services performed by those who, one by one, have fastened a fetter on some portion of the huge dragon of ignorance, thereby and to that extent reducing his power for evil. Small figures they are, tugging and striving to chain down under the rock of Truth the pestilent dragon, each working at a separate coil. I want your advice as to who these enchainers of ignorance should be made to represent. Christ and Mazzini must be two of them. Who shall the other two be? I would like to put you as one of them, and perhaps Owen, but I am not sure about him. Please give me your ideas. I want the four men who have opened the eyes of mankind most widely to the truths of human brotherhood. Then on the top of the square rock of Truth, at the foot of which the enchained dragon of ignorance lies writhing in impotence, stand a young man and a young woman, Capital and Labour, the two made one, from whose eyes the figure of Knowledge, standing behind them, is lifting a veil; and they are gazing into the sky illumined by the glory of the sun, in which they see represented the eternal harmonies, and the peace and the beauties of love. . ."

Holyoake seems to have deprecated the honour, and Earl Grey then suggests "Christ, Milton, Mazzini, and Darwin;" but it was finally decided not to connect "the message" with any individuals. When Holyoake wrote some words of appreciation Lord Grey answered:

"I cannot thank you sufficiently for your letter, or express to you how much I value the kind and appreciative expressions towards myself which it contains. It is a great honour and encouragement to me that you should have so written to me.

"I remain,  
"Your grateful follower,  
"GREY."

"To be thus described by you," he wrote in 1904, "is to be knighted in the Co-operative Realm, of which you,

with confidence entrust the essential features of his early ideal. This was the publishing committee that in time became the well-known Rationalist Press Association. In speaking of the success of his work in this field, I am not merely referring to the advance of this Association. Even had it not appeared, Holyoake might still have contemplated the decay of Secularism without concern. The theology of 1900 was a very different theology from that he had heard in his youth: the clergy of 1900 were a very different body from the clergy of 1830. The marvellous broadening of the Churches themselves was far more significant than the founding of any society with a few hundred advanced members.

Yet he had interest in the formation of a society that should provide a common centre for liberal thinkers, and convey the more advanced truths of science, history, and philosophy to the mass of the people. As early as 1887 I find Mr. H. L. Brækstad, an old friend of his, writing to him :

"Your idea of the Central Bureau for Freethinkers has grown upon me since I saw you last Saturday. I see more and more the importance of it, especially if it were possible to open it in some nice and pleasant rooms in a central thoroughfare. During my walks last week I kept my eyes open, especially in Fleet Street, Strand, Charing Cross, and the lower part of Regent Street."

Three years afterwards we discover the first germ of the later Association. Holyoake had found at last the necessary auxiliary in the publisher, Mr. C. A. Watts, and in the little office of his printing and publishing establishment in Johnson's Court the new organisation, called at first the Propagandist Press Committee, was inaugurated in 1890. Holyoake was president of the Committee, and he remained president, through its

successive changes into Rationalist Press Committee and Rationalist Press Association, until the day of his death. Its object was from the start defined as "to assist in the production and circulation of liberal publications." For many years scholarly works of an advanced character could not find publication in the ordinary way, on account of the smallness of the circulation, and the task of the Committee was to collect funds from its few score members to defray the expense of issuing two or three such works every year.

The Committee made steady progress under Holyoake's presidency, and before his death he saw its membership rise beyond the membership of the National Secular Society in Mr. Bradlaugh's most active years (Bradlaugh gave the number as 1190), and enter upon a phase of activity that left all earlier organisations of that character far behind. In 1899 the Committee was dissolved, or merged in the legally incorporated Rationalist Press Association, of which Holyoake became president. Its growth was now more rapid, and in 1902 it began to issue the sixpenny reprints of large and important publications with which its name is generally associated. In two years, with its slender publishing resources and in spite of the reserve with which such publications were still largely regarded, it sold 600,000 copies of these books. The number was more than doubled during the following three years, despite the fact that the Association had loosed an avalanche of cheap literature in which its more serious works had little prominence. In this new atmosphere, and with such strong indications of permanence about him, Holyoake felt that the critical work to which he had always attached such importance would, when the pen fell from his own nerveless hand, be still maintained in the spirit he desired. Secularism in the old sense was no longer practicable. The hundred

interests in secular causes that he had once thought to bind up in one organisation were now entrusted to a hundred intent and specialised bodies. The one thing that remained was the criticism of what he believed to be erroneous religious traditions, in a broad, cultured, refined way, and with a care to impart positive education while older views were being modified or removed. He was satisfied that this was, and would continue to be, the work of the Rationalist Press Association. And, although he gradually resigned nearly every other official position before the end came, he died president of the new Association. This work is its tribute to his genial and inspiring personality.

In the course of the nineties he undertook other pieces of subsidiary work in connection with his Rationalist propaganda. The most important of these was the founding of a Liberty of Bequest Committee, of which he was president from its inception, early in the nineties, until near the close of his life. The freedom of bodies of heretics was still restricted by several laws, in spite of the enormous progress made in his time. One of these laws was the Sunday Act, which prevented them, where it was rigorously enforced, from charging for admission to their lectures on Sundays, and so put them at an unfair disadvantage. Another injustice arose from the state of the law in regard to bequests. Time after time legacies to freethinking bodies were confiscated by persons to whom the testator did not destine them, on the ground that the purpose of the legacy was illegal. Holyoake stood for a fair combat of truth and error, on whichever side they stood, and resented all such denial of resources to propagandist associations.

In 1893, therefore, he framed a Bill to meet the injustice, and entitled it the "Civil and Religious Liberty Bill." Mr. Manfield introduced it for him in November.



The *Times* relates that there was "Opposition laughter" when Mr. (Sir Philip) Manfield gave notice of his intention, and he wrote to Holyoake :

"The deed is done ! I was horribly nervous, but got through it very well. The friends of Civil and Religious Liberty (or, I ought perhaps to say, my friends) cheered—the enemy laughed. I am afraid all this was ironical, but it is over until Tuesday, when it is down for second reading. Will you be up on Monday ? I feel I want a mentor ! Should I not say coach ?"

Manfield had succeeded Bradlaugh at Northampton—much (he says) to the irritation of Mr. Gurney—and had had little experience of speaking in the House. Even a much stronger man would hardly have been able to carry such a Bill, and it was dropped. It was, moreover, looked upon with coldness by the president of the National Secular Society, who wanted a more specifically Secularist measure. Holyoake continued to preside over the meetings of the Committee, but it seems to have dissolved, without any definite attainment, a few years before his death.

In 1896 he published his last Secularist work, *The Origin and Nature of Secularism*. The book is interesting as a presentment of his final conception of one of the chief works of his life. Two points especially are noteworthy. In the first place the reader is warned from the first page that "secular" is a very different matter from "Secularist." There seems to be some tardy recognition that his earlier ideal was too broad and vague. While "the secular neither ignores, assails, nor denies theology," he holds that "Secularism does conflict with theology." His philosophy is no longer merely a zeal for secular interests, in which the Christian may unite with the Agnostic. "What nobody seems to discern,"

he says, "is that things secular are in themselves quite distinct from Secularism." But while he has thus given a needed precision to his system, he has by no means adopted the current idea of Secularism. The purpose of his work is, he says in a sub-title of it, to show "that where Freethought commonly ends Secularism begins." His meaning, fully elucidated in the later chapters, is that Secularism is "the extension of Freethought to Ethics": not the extension of the critical method to moral conceptions, though this is necessary, but the expansion of Freethought so as to include a strong positive moral culture.

In this way his philosophy has become clearly defined and distinctly practicable. I need not enter into a discussion of the negative features of it. Suffice it to say that he accepted no Christian dogma, and not even the most attenuated shade of theism. On all these points he was a pure Agnostic, and thanked Huxley for the term. He resented the term Atheist, because most of those who would apply it to him understood it to involve a more or less dogmatic denial of the existence of a Supreme Being. Even in the forties, when he bore the name for a short time (during the editorship of the *Oracle*), he merely took it to express the fact that he was without such belief, not that he considered it could be disproved; and he almost immediately began to coin substitutes for it, such as Nethelist, Limitationist, and so on.

On its positive side the last statement of his philosophy, from which he never wavered, is more interesting in that it shows advance in a practical direction. He still makes his system rest on three broad principles:

- "1. The improvement of this life by material means.
2. That science is the available Providence of man.
3. That it is good to do good."

But he now realises that this work is mainly done by "secular," as distinct from "Secularist," agencies. In the sense of those propositions, if they are not taken as exclusive, we are all Secularists to-day. Something more distinctive—something that would mark his system off from negativism on the one hand and from secular issues in general on the other—was needed, and this he finds in the cultivation of character. His position was not only a strictly logical development from the views he had expounded in Owenite halls sixty years before, but it had a place in the life about him. He saw on many sides the growth of Ethical Societies, which were understood to ignore theology and concentrate on the human cultivation of character. With these he always had cordial relations. But his Secularism, in his final conception, must "conflict with theology." On the other hand, he had seen for sixty years what might be the effect of making such conflict the whole of one's task. It involved no test of taste, or character, or culture, and unworthy types of men might be very successful at it. This defect of purely negative Secularism would be met by a positive concern for rational culture in art, science, and morality. You do not help a weak or diseased man much by simply burning his crutches. You must strengthen his limbs.

I have quoted a few interesting comments on this last Secularist volume of Holyoake's in earlier chapters. We saw that Gladstone read a hundred pages of it (out of 130) without any jarring sensation, as he put it. The comment of Dr. J. Parker also will interest many :

"MY DEAR MR. HOLYOAKE,

"I am glad to have your 'Secularism,' though I knew it all in substance long ago. Your Secularism confirms my Christianity. I have thought it not unwise or irreverent to form *some* conception of the beginning

and progress of things so far as I could get at them, and the result of all my inquiry and consideration is that I have adopted the doctrine of Jesus Christ of Nazareth as by far the best I have yet seen. Like yourself, I want to get at the truth, whatever may become of prejudice, superstition, or the glamour of old associations. I account every man orthodox who is honestly endeavouring to get at the truth, however much his conclusions may differ from mine. After carefully studying the ministry and purpose of Jesus Christ, I have no hesitation in saying that Christianity, as it is presented in the New Testament, covers more ground, answers more questions, supplies better reasons, and inspires nobler motives, than any other conception known to me. It is quite possible that the Christian case requires new definition and re-statement (I am quite sure that ecclesiastical Christianity has often done more harm than good), though I am profoundly assured that Jesus Christ himself only requires to be known to be accepted, adored, and obeyed. He will have no lazy followers, no selfish followers, no unreasoning followers; if any of his nominal followers are lazy, selfish, or unreasoning, he disowns and denounces them. This is how I read his argument and appeal. I wish we could have a long day's talk. No effort would be made on my part to make you a sectarian, but I should supremely like to show you the Christ of God as he appeals to my understanding, my heart, and my reverent imagination. You have proved your sincerity by life-long penalty nobly borne, for which reason, kindly permit me to say so, I hold your character, not in admiration only, but in grateful reverence.

"Ever sincerely yours,  
"JOSEPH PARKER."

Every letter spelt progress. This was not, in the dogmatic sense, the Joseph Parker he had encountered at Banbury fifty years before. His letter is strangely like that of Gladstone, commenting on the same book,

in its subdued note and its furtive vision of coming change. One other letter may be quoted as an indication of that wide change in religious feeling that Holyoake marked so keenly in his last decade. Amongst the men of science and letters whom he asked to lend their names to the Rationalist Press Association, in 1899, was Lord Hobhouse, who sent him the following reply :

"I have just received an appeal on behalf of a Rationalist Press Association, of which I infer that you are the prime mover. I speak of my advanced age with diffidence, because I am addressing a man whom I believe to be older than myself, and yet who is conspicuously active in promoting what he believes to be truth and justice. But my energies are fast dying out, and I feel extremely averse from joining any fresh societies or combinations. At the same time, increased length of life has continually brought to me increase of conviction that, important as is authority, tradition, or custom, for the support of our weak human nature, the free play of the most divine faculty in man, his reason, is far more essential ; and that it is very difficult to exercise, while acquiescence in use and wont is easy enough. I see, or think I see, in this generation a lazy relapse to ruder and less noble ideals of life—the military, the priestly, the autocratic ; with the consequent habit of praying to Hercules instead of putting a shoulder to the wheel, and of looking to be guided and protected by somebody else through the hard places of life instead of overcoming them by self-exertion. Those who are called Rationalists appear to me to be doing, as they have long done, very valuable work under great discouragement, by continually calling on their fellow-men to bring assertions to the test of reason and to rely on themselves."

Lord Hobhouse felt that his age prevented him from taking any active part, but he enclosed a cheque for £25. Others—notably Sir Leslie Stephen—gave their

names to the Association, and followed its work with interest. It gradually attracted so many men of ability that all danger was precluded of its ever falling into the precarious position of the earlier movements—of becoming a one-man movement—and Holyoake passed into his ninth decade of life with the feeling that, on this side also, his life-work was falling into hands that could be trusted.

## CHAPTER XXVIII

### HOLYOAKE AS A WRITER

IN the earlier chapters of this work I gave a brief analysis of, or, at least, a reference to each volume or pamphlet that Holyoake issued. It soon became clear that, if the practice were maintained throughout, the work would attain proportions that had not been contemplated. Indeed, so large a number of his smaller publications were ephemeral in their nature, and would require explanations out of proportion to their importance, that on this ground alone the practice had to be discarded. But a feeling will have grown upon the reader that, in spite of the thousands of lectures that he delivered, with all the exhausting travel that they imply, and the incessant preoccupation with committees of reform-movements, Holyoake contrived to maintain, not only a large, but an admirable literary output, and a few pages may well be devoted to this part of his activity.

A list of his publications will be found at the end of the present volume, but, although it has had the great advantage of being prepared by a special student of the matter, Mr. Goss, it would be unsafe to describe it as complete. Holyoake's literary activity covers a period of sixty-four years—almost a record in literary output—and many of his small pamphlets may very well have escaped the very careful search that has been made. Many, certainly, have quite disappeared, though some

chance reference or advertisement tells of their having been published. These are included in the list, though I have not seen them. As it is, I have read more than a hundred separate publications of his, from two-page leaflets (very few in number) to two-volume works, besides many thousands of journalistic and magazine articles. The total number of his separate publications, besides the few that may have escaped notice, is 166, three of which have two large volumes each. That is, of course, not a very large output, absolutely speaking, but when one fits it in the frame of so industrious and distracted a life it is remarkable.

Much more remarkable, however, is the range of subjects on which he wrote with effect. Religion, politics, and co-operation are the chief themes that occupied his pen, but he took journalistic licence to roam; and as a lecturer—"a pedlar in opinions," as he put it, or a purveyor of all kinds of truth from the academic workshops to the mass of the people—he was forced to cultivate variety. An enormous number of his pamphlets are reprinted journalistic articles or printed lectures. A hostile writer in a Lincoln paper a few years ago gave, in spiteful terms, some idea of the procedure:

"Mr. G. J. Holyoake is a curious survival of a past school of pre-Agnosticism. Between 1845 and 1855 he figured as a kind of diluted philosopher, who moralised on progress, as he attached himself to the fringe of advanced movements, after the manner of a fly on a wheel buzzing its satisfaction: 'How we go round.' Last year Mr. Holyoake published a book of reminiscences, entitled *Sixty Years of an Agitator's Life*, which contains some pleasant reading, if we overlook the predominance of the first personal pronoun [in an autobiography!]. In his time he has written some striking books, which to those ignorant of his personality would



lead one to suppose the author to be a much abler man than he is, although he is by no means destitute of ability. He is a born rhetorician, whose business it is to elaborate pretty sentences. For years he would lecture upon a subject until every metaphor was polished like an electro-plated proverb; then he would publish it as a booklet. The booklet was far cleverer than the man."

The conception of Holyoake as a fly on the wheels of the democratic chariot is hardly less absurd than the theory that a writer's books can be abler than himself. But the writer—if, as I see good reason to believe, it was Stewart Ross—knew something of books, and of the way in which Holyoake made them. Large numbers of his booklets, and many chapters of his more important works, made their first appearance in the form of lectures. Even in later years, when little of the lecture needed to be written in advance, he would make rough notes in a large hand on nondescript slips of paper, and amongst these one is sure to find an epigram or two. He delighted in choice phrases, rather than moving ones; and the preference suited his slight physique and quick mind. The number of these "electro-plated proverbs"—a good phrase—would grow, as he continued to give the lecture (sometimes for a year or two), and at length the whole matter would appear as an eight or sixteen-page pamphlet. Many chapters of *Sixty Years* and *Bygones*, especially those that deal with the characteristics of orators or statesmen, first took shape in this way.

I think it will hardly be disputed that, if his life had not been so crowded with propagandist work, he would have attained a high mark in literature. As it is, his works are generally entertaining and often fascinating. We have the light fluent pen of the ideal journalist, and the unfailing humour and originality that give the reader

security against dulness. I have quoted so many instances of this that even those who have not read his *Among the Americans*, or *Sixty Years*, or *Bygones*, or *History of Co-operation*, will need no further comment on it. There were few subjects except religion—and religion is not wholly an exception—that did not sparkle under his treatment. The evolution of his gift of humour is curious. One finds no trace of it in the fragments of his early diary or letters, or in the records of his earliest apostolate. The first flash that I can trace was the impetuous phrase that was rewarded with six months in Gloucester Jail, and it seems to have been in the jail that it fully developed. From that time, at all events, we find his letters and articles exhibiting the playfulness that attracts in most of his later writing.

Besides humour, he had a considerable measure of originality, generally a happy originality, that gave distinction to his pen. He tells somewhere of a printer who made an altogether ridiculous phrase out of a few words in the manuscript of one of his books. He protested that the reader's common-sense ought not to have passed such a sentence, when the man observed, quite seriously: "Well, I took it that it was one of your quaintnesses of phrase, Mr. Holyoake." He had originality of mind, as our whole story tells, and was happy in having a proportionately flexible diction. There was some truth in Dr. Collyer's saying that "nature only made one impression when he was struck off." His earliest studies were in the anatomy of thought and speech (grammar and logic)—living thought and speech, not the dead subjects of manuals of the time—and he reaped the full advantage of them. They saved him from the habit the busy journalist acquires of writing so much in conventional phrases. He always endeavoured to find time to say things in a fresh way,

without doing violence to the language, as the writer intent on originality is apt to do. When to these gifts we add a fine taste, wide and varied reading, an excellent memory, and constant intercourse with brilliant talkers, we have the elements of a good writer. But, as I have hinted, he never had the leisure or the education to become a great writer. There are passages in his later works that might be quoted as models by a teacher of letters ; but on the next page one might find a passage that would shock the teacher.

A passage that he wrote in his eighty-sixth year (*Bygones*, I, 56) runs :

"Some of the happiest evenings of [my] younger days were spent in the rooms of university students. It was pleasant to be near persons who dwelt in the kingdom of knowledge, who could wander at will on the mountain tops of science and literature, and have glimpses of unknown lands of light which I might never see. Who has seen London under the reign of the sun, after a sullen, fitful season, knows how wondrous is the transformation. Like the sheen of the gods the glittering rays descend, dispelling and absorbing the sombre clouds. A radiance rests on turret and roof. Then hidden creatures that crawl or fly come forth and put on golden tints. The cheerless poor emerge from their fireless chambers with the grateful emotions of sun-worshippers."

*Bygones Worth Remembering* was written when the shadow of death was visibly coming over him, yet it has numbers of fine passages like this, and plenty of fresh epigrams. When he recollects the proverb, "Let bygones be bygones," he retorts : "Proverbs are like plants : they have a soil and climate in which alone they flourish." Some of the best qualities of his writing are well illustrated here and there in the book. He says of

his energetic friend Joseph Cowen : " I was struck with the dexterity with which he put a word of fire into a tame sentence, infused colour into a pale-faced expression, and established a pulse in an anæmic one." Cowen's editorial pencil would have respected that sentence. It recalls his comment on Robert Owen's works : " It was said of Montaigne that his sentences were vascular and alive, and, if you pricked them, they bled. If you pricked Mr. Owen's, when he wrote on his system, you lost your needle in the wool."

*Bygones*, his last work, has a surprising vitality, optimism, and dignity in the circumstances of its production. It is, like *Sixty Years*, rather a collection of reminiscences of other people than an autobiography, though it naturally contains much autobiographic matter. Apart from the splendid cheerfulness of its close, a rare example of octogenarian optimism which I will quote later, it is chiefly distinguished and valuable for its sketches of the prominent men who had gone before him into the silence. Harriet Martineau's portraits were his admiration, and, no doubt, largely his model. " Statues sculptured from life," he calls them. They are " not like the false eulogies of the dead, which, by pretending perfection, lie to the living, where silence on errors or deficiencies are of the nature of deceit." The ungrammatical " are " reminds us of his limitations ; for a grammarian he slumbered too often. But he was as capable as Harriet Martineau of good and true characterisation. Of Bradlaugh he finely says :

" The coarse environments of his early life lent imperiousness to his manners. In later years, when he was in the society of equals, where masterfulness was less possible and less necessary, he acquired courtesy and a certain dignity—the attribute of conscious power. He was the greatest agitator, within the limits of the law,

who appeared in my time among the working people. . . . That from so low a station he should have risen so high, and, after reaching the very platform of his splendid ambition, should die in the hour of his opportunity of triumph, was one of the tragedies of public life that touched the heart of the nation, in whose eyes Mr. Bradlaugh had become a commanding figure."

Nothing juster has been written of Bradlaugh; and this was written immediately after his daughter had made a severe attack on Holyoake. Gladstone, Mazzini, Mill, Newman, Spencer, Cowen, G. Eliot, and Harriet Martineau are drawn just as well, and from personal knowledge. Of Gladstone's conversation he says: "It was like an oration in miniature; its exactness, its modulation, its force of expression, its foreseeingness of all the issues, came at will."

His chapter on Disraeli is biassed, but one of the best in the book. He compares him with Lassalle, with the same audacity with which he compares Gladstone with Voltaire. The only contrast he notices is that, while both issued a challenge to a duel, "Disraeli had the prudence to challenge Daniel O'Connell, who, he knew, was under a vow not to fight one." "He was capable of serving any party, but preferred the party that could best serve him." It is tantalising that he includes no chapter on Chamberlain. It must have been one of his disappointments that he died too soon to pen one.

*Bygones* was a further instalment of recollections, given in answer to the popular craving engendered by *Sixty Years*. Its earlier chapters have the weakness of such supplementary works, but the convenient death of so many people he had known gave him fresh opportunities. "You would make an article out of your grandmother," T. B. Potter once wrote him in playful impatience. It would have had the excuse of being interesting. Father

- ✓ Bernard Vaughan once defined oratory as "the art of saying most about least." Holyoake's pen was familiar with that art, though there is usually substance in his chapters. He had the eighteenth-century gift of writing an essay on a broom-stick, or something equally arid to the common writer, and making his reader go through every line. "The light, firm touch and quiet epigram would make the dullest subject readable," George H. Lewes said, after reading one of his books.

*Sixty Years* was written in the maturity of his power. I need say little of it, partly because I have inserted so many phrases and passages as we proceeded, partly because every reader of this chapter will have read it. The charm of the work is not by any means due solely to the series of romantic episodes and characters it recalls. "This is a book before which criticism finds itself disarmed," one of its chief reviewers observed. No book of recollections was ever better worth writing, and not many of recent years have been better written. Terse-ness, ease, and humour are remarkably combined in his style. The only chapter we could dispense with is the first, in which he expounds his excuses for writing the book. His defects of training peep out at times—as in the sentence: "George Cruikshank was one whom, when Jerrold saw him enter the committee-room, exclaimed," etc.—but the work abounds in qualities that no training could have given. "I had some instinct of art," he says, quaintly enough. "I admired Robespierre—not on account of principles ascribed to him, but because he used one-sized paper, and wrote out himself all his speeches in a large and careful hand. No one can do that without detecting verbiage, irrelevance, and limp-ness of expression. But, though I knew the plan to be good, I never had time to follow it." The two pages that follow this (in ch. xxvi) are sufficient proof of his

"instinct for art." But the work has obtained recognition in its class, and is well known. When David Masson read every word of it, less voracious readers will have gone through it more than once.

These two works are, as I said, largely made up of earlier lectures and articles, and any who cares to turn back to the *Reasoner* and *Chronicle* can trace the improvement of his qualities. From his earliest articles in the *Oracle* he was clear, terse, epigrammatic, and uncommon; though he was never oracular. Most of his readers would say that he was saved from this by his sense of modesty; I should prefer to say, by his sense of taste. Refinement was his first quality; humour the second. So his dangerous originality never degenerated into eccentricity, but remained usefully fertile in suggesting titles, of which he was prodigal.

It would involve too much repetition to run over the general classes of his publications. I may recall only that the largest class—his Co-operative works and essays—have two defects, from the literary point of view. The chief one is the inability, or want of time, to fit his material into a symmetrical frame—in chronological or some other natural order. The historian or biographer should build after the manner of the modern American architect. He must first erect the steel frame of his structure, and then fill it in, carefully concealing it, with his material. Holyoake had—he prided himself on this—the keen instinct of the journalist to get at facts, which gives great value to his historical and biographical work; and he could put art and brightness into what threatened to be the dullest chapter, as he went along. But he had the corresponding defect of a lack of large and comprehensive arrangement. It must also be borne in mind that the familiar edition of his *History of Co-operation* was issued, and partly written, in his extreme old age, with

failing power and dimness of eye. What I call the other defect is only such from the purely literary point of view : it is the defect of a quality. His propagandist ardour for profit-sharing is too insistent. However, most of these works *are* propagandist, and the ardour will be accounted a virtue. His six histories of Co-operation (early history, general history, histories of the Rochdale, Leeds, and Derby Societies, and *Co-operation To-day*) form one of the most solid pieces of work he has left behind ; and his biographies—R. Owen, Hetherington, R. Stephens, R. Carlile, T. Cooper, and Mill, besides articles in the *Dictionary*—will be used by historians. And, apart from his historical labours, all his literary resources have been generously used for sixty years in presenting the Co-operative principle. That involves repetition, yet there is amazing freshness even in his latest pamphlets, such as *Essentials of Co-operative Education*.

Of his early educational works it is not necessary to say much. They must be judged by their age (1840–1852). In that age they were excellent, for he was an able and—what was rarer—an enlightened teacher of the young, and some of them are still of advantage. His *Co-operative Movement To-day* is read, by official instruction, in the schools of Canada to-day. Wendell Phillips made a manual of his *Public Speaking and Debate*, and Dr. Parker contributed to circulate it in our time.

His political writings are slight, but the Liberal historian will find their effect without a microscopic scrutiny of the life of the nineteenth century. Early booklets such as *Organisation not of Arms, but of Ideas*, helped considerably to turn the workers from Chartism to Radicalism, and so to build up the force of modern Liberalism from the extremes of Whiggery and Anarchy. Many a later pamphlet hit its mark ; notably, the



*Liberal Situation, New Defence of the Ballot, Working-class Representation, and Patriotism by Charity.* In many other matters he helped the cause of sober progress—temperance, the Sunday opening of museums, public executions, emigration, trades unions, international exhibitions, bribery,<sup>1</sup> etc. On all these questions he wrote pamphlets, and his terse, arresting style must have given them influence. I know only one pamphlet of his that wholly missed its mark. This was a curious reprint from the *Newcastle Chronicle*, with the title *A Suppressed Princess*, which he issued (under the name of "Landor Praed") in 1863. It was an appeal on behalf of the "Princess of Cumberland" (Mrs. Ryves), whom he found living in the "stuccoey and prosaic streets of Camden Town." His vindication of her marriage to the Duke of Cumberland was formidable, but it proved almost the only forlorn cause of the many desperate ones his pamphlets advocated.

The subject of religion naturally classifies a very large number of his books and pamphlets, but, after the preceding chapter, we need not dwell on them. The most serious and ample exposition of his critical opinions is found in his *Trial of Theism* (1858). The later large work, the *Origin and Nature of Secularism*, is scrappy and unsatisfactory in argument, but will be found the easiest and latest statement of his whole philosophy. A little pamphlet, the *Logic of Death*, that has been reprinted of late years, will give the best idea of the vigour and ability with which he faced ultimate problems in his maturity. It is a fine piece of writing. In later years his religious pamphlets lack nerve, because he held that ultimate problems did not properly come—one way or the other—within the range of the Secularist. During

<sup>1</sup> It may be noted here that he was the originator of the name "Jingoes." All controversy has ended in the recognition of this.

the half century between the two larger books he wrote only a few slight pamphlets on theology. Most of these were directed at securing the abolition of the compulsory oath, and here again his work was successful. His anti-theological criticisms are—apart from the *Trial of Theism*—buried for the most part in anti-theological journals.

The heterogeneous remainder of his literary output has no importance. It consists of journalistic comments on questions of the hour, and the titles give explanation enough. What I have said will enable any reader to look intelligently over the bibliography at the close. It will be seen that his reading was almost confined to economics, politics, and religion. History he knew well only in so far as it bore on these; in other words, he was thoroughly familiar with the history of England, if not of Europe, in the nineteenth century, but went little beyond this. A cognate limitation hampered him in his unfamiliarity with foreign tongues. His Latin and Greek studies were stricken prematurely by political blasts, and his French was always elementary. Of science he had little knowledge, in spite of his early bent and his close acquaintance with so many distinguished scientists—Spencer, Huxley, Tyndall, Bain, I. Roberts, Sir M. Foster, etc. Its enormous expansion during his lifetime put it beyond the reach of his slender opportunities. For many years he attended and followed eagerly the early meetings of the British Association, but he had soon to be content to admire its progress at a distance. Of philosophy proper he knew nothing later than Mill, Hamilton, and Mansel. The bloodless abstractions of metaphysics had no power to lure him from the throbbing problems of actual life, and he had little faculty for them.

With good literature he was very much better

acquainted. He had read most of the finer eighteenth-century writers—Sterne was the model he recommended to young men—and all that appeared in his own age. His native taste for such reading was reinforced by his wide acquaintance with men of letters: to have known, in greater or less degree, W. S. Landor, S. Butler, George Eliot, G. H. Lewes, Mrs. Lynn Linton, H. Martineau, Browning, Ruskin, Tennyson, Gladstone, and Morley was an education. His own humour and epigrammatic turn gave him a fine selective instinct in reading, and his memory was remarkably good. He was thus able to add a further distinction to his lectures and writings by pleasing quotations and anecdote. He kept, indeed, bundles of the nondescript bits of paper on which he used to scribble notes—I have found lecture notes written on the back of the ornamental leaf of a cigar-box—with striking passages jotted down as he read, to be used when opportunity came. Good as his memory was, he did not trust to it to find again the gem he had noticed in his author. It was dug out at once, and placed in his orderly collection.

He had in a very large degree the “art to conceal his art.” The man who wrote of his much-polished epigrams knew something of his methods. He could say very apt and striking things extempore, but his reader is generally misled in thinking that the book or article has flowed smoothly and swiftly from his pen. Even his letters were often written twice, and were cut down and corrected most laboriously. Most of the pleasant friendly notes I have quoted, or will quote in the next chapter, were tossed off in a breath; but of the more important letters I have quoted I have had before me a first copy, scored and blackened with alterations. It is curious that it is only in the matter of these letters that he over-elaborated his writing. They tend to become stiff and

pedantic. His spontaneous writing (of a letter) was better. But he had so often to write letters on which the tranquillity and progress of a great cause more or less depended that he took time. It was then that he looked up to the placid portrait of Talleyrand hanging in his room, a constant rebuke to zeal and impetuosity. It would have been better for their causes if some of his colleagues had done the same.

His journalistic work had often to be done hurriedly, and in the romantic circumstances that reporting entails. He tells somewhere of allowing a small man that stood before him in a crowd to stand on his (Holyoake's) toes, to see better, while Holyoake wrote his copy on the shorter man's hat. His long railway journeys were very often spent in journalistic work. "If you write like this in the train, what will you do in your study?" a northern editor, who had just offered him an engagement, said to him. Even to enumerate the journals he wrote in, from his early articles in the *Leeds Times* under Samuel Smiles, would occupy pages. He served more than sixty years in that profession. As a reporter he had few equals, and his complete knowledge of the nineteenth century gave value to his later articles. Still, some of his finest articles are contained in the earliest papers he wrote for.<sup>1</sup> As an editor he was admirable, and unsuccessful. He founded and edited eighteen journals at different times—I have noticed each in its age—and eleven of these did not reach a twelfth issue. The *Reasoner* was his one success, and this never had value as property. The failure was due, of course, to the circumstance that his journals generally appealed to a small heterodox group, and that even in this small world he generally had rivals who declined to be hampered

<sup>1</sup> It is noteworthy that he wrote a weekly letter to the *Birmingham Weekly Post* for about twenty years—until it became *Unionist*.

by considerations of culture and taste. The *English Leader* and the *Present Day* were broader in their aim, but they retained an outspokenness in regard to theology that restricted their circulation. Where Thornton Hunt, with his brilliant staff and slighter heresy, failed, Holyoake was not likely to succeed ; and the one opening for him in the editorial world was with a free, unattached journal.

I have said that his writing grew out of his lecturing to a great extent. It would, in one sense, be more correct to say that his literary qualities gave success to his lectures. The forms of public speaking he cultivated in a high degree, because he came of an age when there was a far greater zeal for such cultivation. It was no accident that English public life had ten times as many powerful speakers between 1830 and 1870 as in the next forty years (if we assign Gladstone and Bright to the earlier period). The average standard of speaking was proportionately higher. There was more fire in the themes of the time, more enthusiasm in the mass of hearers, and more training in aspirants to the platform. As an early aspirant Holyoake studied declamation, and acquired ease and dignity of bearing. But he never had the robustness that a great speaker needs. Since this can be very largely acquired, it is curious that he never cured his voice of its thinness. He was at his best in speaking to small audiences of cultivated men and women, and I have often admired the striking aptness of his diction and fluency of his delivery on such occasions. For larger audiences his voice had not the resonance that impresses, and his fineness and subtlety were lost on them to a great extent. He had passion and a command of the orator's imagery, but was not an orator. He lacked the power, and he sought to convince rather than to move.

In later years he would scribble only a few rough notes, with a few terse sentences completed, in preparation for his most important addresses. The notes lie before me of the very fine address he gave at the Hall of Science the Sunday after Bradlaugh's death. Any reader who may have listened to it will be surprised to hear that the notes are a dozen slips of rough waste paper, with two or three lines scribbled on each in a large hand. But his subject was on such occasions well meditated. Much of what he said on Bradlaugh reappears in his literary appreciations. A deaf man would, I imagine, have concluded that he was a great orator. For those who had ears the voice was too thin and nervous. His voice carried well, however, and he could be heard throughout large buildings. But, apart from Co-operative meetings, where the function attracted the crowd, he rarely had very large audiences to address, in the later years of his life. He chose throughout life to appeal, by voice and pen, to the workers, who needed help, and his fineness was beyond them. The limitation was theirs.

## CHAPTER XXIX

### A CHEERFUL OCTOGENARIAN

THE last decade of his life found Holyoake only little less active than the preceding one. The illness of 1894 and 1895 had indeed reduced his strength, but he nursed it with care, and still employed it in human service. He continued his journalistic work until the year of his death. He presided at the meetings of the Travelling Tax Committee until 1902, and maintained his attendance at the Newspaper Board at Manchester, the councils of the Co-Partnership movement, International Alliance, Rationalist Press Committee, Liberty of Bequest Committee, and the Co-operative Congress and Crystal Palace Festival until 1904.

Indeed, his diary for 1897, his eightieth year, is a remarkable octogenarian document. In that year he wrote, at some pressure, his history of the Leeds Society, edited a little work for a friend (*The Path I Took*), and began to set in order the "fifty years of confusion" in his book-room for the purpose of writing further reminiscences. He attended nearly all the meetings of the committees to which he belonged, and spoke at many functions that were now annual events in his calendar—the Gladstone and the postmen's dinner at Brighton, the Rationalist Press dinner at London, the Secular anniversary at Leicester, and others. He co-operated vigorously with the International Peace Association on the Cretan trouble, and spoke at the Bradlaugh

celebration in the autumn. In September he went to Holland for the International Congress, at which he spoke twice, and made a visit to Paris on his return. He rarely lectured now, but in many other respects his work increased.

One of the chief reasons for his continued activity was the cheerful optimism with which he surveyed the life of the world about him. He was singularly free from the moroseness and pessimism that so often cloud the last years of active men. Old friends and colleagues wrote him in senescent phrases about the perversity of things, but he himself was irrepressibly buoyant and confiding. A few letters to a Southport friend (Mr. W. Ashton) may be taken as typical of his personal letters at this time :

“When a friend asked Douglas Jerrold if he had a mind to lend him a guinea, he answered that he had the mind, but not the guinea. I have the mind to write you a hundred pages, but I have not the time to. The paper is excellent, but ‘too good,’ as Wordsworth said of woman, ‘for human nature’s daily food’—of ideas. I pray for blessings for all of you on the mountains.”

Near Christmas-time he writes :

“What could have put it into your friendly head to send me a succulent, life-giving, Festive Turkey? It is not only an inducement to, it is a condition of living. . . . Yours in season, and out of season.”

“I congratulate you on having had the influenza,” he writes again. “If it has had the same effect upon all your household, Glengariff must be delightful. You never wrote a letter so bright, or so sustained in its humour.”

Old friends like W. Morrison and Goldwin Smith were trying to infect him with querulousness, but they had



little success. Only in regard to the Boer war does any shade come over his letters. Memorial cards were pouring upon him weekly. Gladstone and Collet died in 1898, Ingersoll in 1899, Hollick in 1900. He could now count on the fingers of one hand the survivors of the heroic forties. For such of them as were dying in straitened circumstances he begged guineas from his friends. He had by strategy to force assistance on Truelove, and he helped G. J. Harney and the widow of Ernest Jones. He even, as we shall see, appealed to Mr. Carnegie to establish a fund to meet such cases. For himself life was still sweet and generous enough. He never had a large income, but the magazines and journals were always open to him, and his pen was still bright and active. His home was as pleasant to him as any mansion could have been. It was crowded with memorials of his career and tokens of regard. The faces of fellow-actors in many a stirring drama looked on him from every wall—Owen, Carlile, Cowen, Orsini, Garibaldi, Gladstone, Wendell Phillips, Ingersoll, Stuart Mill, Spencer, and so many others. One of Colonel Macerone's pikes of 1831 stood in a corner; two Garibaldean flags were reverently folded in a drawer (and hung from the window on gala days). Well might he be optimistic, if not a little proud. Every struggle these trophies bore witness to had succeeded. He had got beyond the slopes of Pisgah, at least. A friend one day sent him a cutting from a daily, relating how Edward VII. had affectionately greeted the President of the French Republic, while the band played the Marseillaise. Few readers would see any philosophy in it, but those two old men did. "Shade of Rouget de Lisle!" his friend exclaims.

The story of his remaining years is one that can be told best by correspondence. His quiet influence on the cause of Co-operation is expressed by the scores of letters

he still receives from all parts. "I hope that in the near future you will send some Co-operative propagandists to Japan," an official writes him from the Home Office at Tokyo. English journals and magazines asked him incessantly for articles on Co-operation. *Commerce* sent a representative to interview him. He was now active also in the International Peace Association, and was nominated as a delegate to St. Petersburg. "If I look as well when I am 60 as you do when you are 83," Mr. Stead wrote him, "I shall consider myself lucky. Had you been half your age, you could not have displayed more vigour, more vitality, and more of the qualities which make a Chairman [at their dinner in 1899] the centre and soul of the meeting over which he presides." "I wish we had a thousand Holyoakes," Mr. Hodgson Pratt wrote. But Holyoake wisely refused to tempt the fates by a journey to Russia. "Age has imposed on me," he wrote to Mr. Stead, "not a lessened love of adventure, but a lessened power of activity." He must have hesitated, for all his old ardour was aflame in the cause of peace, in which he was deeply interested in his last decade.

In 1898 he took the chair for a lecture by the Rev. Dr. Lorrimer at the Westbourne Park Institute, and contracted some friendship with Dr. Clifford. His older Free Church friend, Dr. Parker, was drawing near the end. "Always believe," Dr. Parker wrote him in September 1899, "in my deep personal interest in everything that concerns you, and my heartiest desire that all good and comfortable things may attend your life. For myself I am so lonesome and miserable at times as to be no longer a Christian; but the light will come." It is quaint to read the Secularist consoling the divine:

"What you say of yourself," Holyoake replied, "I could not read without concern. Depression is desolation, as I well know. In my younger days it often came

to me from physical exhaustion. Sorrow and fatigue have brought it to you. Time, rest, and defiant abandonment, tempered by the thought how great the calamity might be, and thankfulness for good that without self-merit had come, are the only mitigations I know."

They were cordial to the end, and after Parker's death (and that of Hugh Price Hughes) Holyoake wrote his appreciation of both in a small pamphlet with the title *Two Great Preachers*.

A letter to Justin McCarthy in 1899 has some interest :

"Ever since I read in your fascinating volume of 'Reminiscences' your description of myself, I have had it in my mind to thank you. It is by far the most discerning I have ever seen, and exactly describes my view of things—limited. My mind is like a commercial company, 'Limited' in its responsibility for the existence of things unknown. Thank you for the generosity of your useful and defensive thought of me."<sup>1</sup>

"Your letter gave me the most genuine delight," Mr. McCarthy answered. "I wrote of you exactly as I felt and as I knew, and I am glad to find that my portrait is recognised as a likeness by its subject."

At this time Holyoake was himself writing his further volumes of reminiscences. He wrote also a history of the Derby Co-operative Society, and a lengthy preface for Collet's *History of the Taxes on Knowledge*, for which he had

<sup>1</sup> In the course of a long reference to Holyoake, Mr. McCarthy had said: "George Jacob Holyoake I have known for much more than a quarter of a century, and have been concerned with him in many a movement for political and social reform. I have not known a man of more unselfish purpose or more philanthropic aim. He might fairly be described, like Leigh Hunt's Abou Ben Adhem, as 'one who loved his fellow man.' He has suffered all manner of penalties again and again, because he would not pretend to have a certain belief when he had it not. His influence among the working classes, for whom he wrought and sacrificed so much, has always been a wise and moderating influence."

some work to find a publisher. Several of the London journals subscribed in the end to defray the cost of publishing it. The proprietor of the *Athenæum* wrote him, when the book appeared (in 1899) :

"I do indeed value much your kind reference to my dear father. What you have written is just like yourself—full of generosity. You are ever ready to praise others, and to recognise their labours. I do hope your own work for the public good will never be forgotten. I know this, that so long as I live I shall do my small part to keep it in remembrance."

A little later Holyoake wrote to Mr. Francis :

"The days have been so dark we feared we should not be able to see the shortest day when it came. But on any day your beautiful present would light up the room."

He had reached the twentieth century with no diminution of cheerfulness. His mind darkened only when he looked toward the southern horizon, and thought of South Africa, but otherwise his letters were so bright that correspondents address him as "My dear young friend." On a particularly bad day he wrote :

"January 23rd,  
"Zero year.

"DEAR ASHTON,

"Alas, we meet not now. Weather bad. Pressure from Derby for their History. The wedding on hand. My mind is sodden with the rain. I have not a dry idea in my head. My conversation is damp, and would give you influenza.

"Yours all the same."

But his life was brightened every few days by some valued greeting. On January 27th a wire came from

Scotland (as it often did): "Your health was enthusiastically drunk to-night by a hundred Scottish Burns Club Co-operators, and they send you greeting and good love." In May, however, he again met with a nasty accident, and friends were concerned. He was summoned to London to speak at the cremation of his old friend, Dr. G. Bird, when he was knocked down in avoiding a crowd at London Bridge Station. The most painful part of it to him seems to have been that the crowd was there to do honour to the Naval Brigade on its return from South Africa. His own account of the matter to a friend runs:

"To avoid being forced by the crowd off the platform, I turned into a fenced-off space, where some impediment I did not notice threw me down. The first thing I saw was the new hat I had been cautioned not to spoil the first day of wearing it, rolling along the ground. I was raised, bruised and bleeding at one hand. I was advised to sit down on a seat kindly vacated for me, but I thought I had been down sufficiently. A police officer was directed to see me into a cab. . . . In my damaged state I resembled one of the wounded from South Africa; but as yet I have heard nothing of a pension—not even a mention by Lord Roberts."

He was writing this letter a week after the accident. When he got to the end of his account he went out for a walk, and was immediately knocked down by a cyclist. The man had to choose between running down Holyoake or a lady, and "as I have always favoured the rights of women," he went on in the second part of his letter, "I did not complain; though I may complain of the bruises on the right side, arm and hand, before the left side was well." He had long ceased to be indignant with such assailants. Colliding with a man in Fleet Street one day, he turned round and said: "If it was my fault, I

apologise : if yours, I pardon you." A few weeks after the second accident we find him attending the International Alliance Congress at Paris.

"Many happy returns of the day to the Grand Old Man of English Free Thought," Mr. Frederic Harrison wrote, on his eighty-fourth birthday. "May you continue to keep alive the flame of republican honesty in these degenerate days." Holyoake was not so ready to admit that they were degenerate days, with all his memory of the enthusiasm of the thirties and forties. In the summer he sent the appeal to Mr. Carnegie that I mentioned previously.

"There is," he wrote, "an order of men—'extinct volcanoes,' as Disraeli would call them—who die one by one unregarded and unfriended. I refer to those men who perish through caring for others more than for themselves—a disease of which not many die. It is their nature never to rest while injustice is done, or preventable suffering exist within their ken. These men go out on the forlorn hope of thought on which few will venture. . . . An endowment where such persons might end their days in comfort, free from precariousness, would be a noble provision. Such persons are an Insurance Society of Betterment, of which they themselves pay the premium, and the public reaps the advantage. Such a remnant of Decayed Publicists would teem with interest and instruction."

In a letter to Mr. Morley, asking his influence, he suggested a small fund, to begin with, that would give £20 a year to ten persons. Mr. Carnegie had reminded him of "Bulwer's home for Decayed Authors" and other failures, and preferred the idea of a pension fund. The "idea was splendid," he said, and he gave hope of seeing it realised. All appreciated the generous action of Holyoake in so thinking of less successful workers amidst his own wealth of friends and comparative ease. Holyoake

himself was by no means a "decayed publicist." That year (1901) he edited the *Sun* for a week at the invitation of Mr. Bottomley (a relative), and well earned the largest journalistic fee he ever received. When his work was over the *Sun* had a leader on "The late editor's body-guard."

"As soon as it became known that Mr. George Jacob Holyoake, the veteran apostle of free speech, a free press, and reform, was to occupy the editorial chair of the *Sun*, it was found necessary to guard the editorial sanctum, even against his old friends, who were anxious once more to look into his sunny face and grasp his hand. It was felt that the crowding-in of his old admirers, together with the week's editorial labours necessary to the production of a great daily paper with six, and sometimes eight editions a day, would be at the risk of his health. . . . I have been amazed at his clearness of perception, accurate judgment, discrimination, and prompt decision in deciding upon the suitability or unsuitability of articles for the columns of the *Sun*. The leading articles which have appeared from his pen have been decided upon and written within the hour, and the brief seasons during the day which have been assigned to him for rest have been occupied by him in the preparation of articles (30 in all) for other departments of the *Sun*."

He had been restored to general notice two months before by Mr. Stead, who made him the subject of his "character-sketch" (September, 1901), at the suggestion of Mr. W. Ashton. "My only difficulty," Mr. Stead wrote, "is the impossibility of getting a full-length sketch of you and all that you have done into the narrow compass of the space at my disposal." The sketch was a fine one. "It is probable," it concluded, "that there is no other man of eighty-four now living in this country who has so honourable a record." Mindful always of old colleagues, he was at that time setting

afoot a movement for some tribute to E. O. Greening ; and I find a letter from Mr. Gray acknowledging his kindness "in sending me the beautiful birthday gift which was so unexpected and will be so much prized. . . . When I have done with it, I shall hand it down with pride to my son, and tell him to treasure it in remembrance of you and your great work." He was also collecting subscriptions in this country for the American memorial to Colonel Ingersoll.

The year 1902 found him as buoyant and inspiring as ever. The advertisement of a lecture to be given by him at Lewes gives as the title :

"Of 'Good Old Times' let others prate—  
I thank my stars that I was born so late."

But it was no idle optimism that he advocated, and although in this year his attendance at committees began to fail, he lent his name to several fresh enterprises. He became President of the National Democratic League, and Vice-president of the Land Nationalisation Society. "You'll never grow old," Mr. W. Digby wrote him. "You may pass into another form of existence, but such vivacity, such virility, such force, and such biting sarcasm cannot perish." "You certainly are wonderful, and your brain is as vigorous as ever," Mr. W. Morrison exclaims. These were congratulations on his eighty-sixth birthday. The members of the South Place Chapel arranged a reception for him in honour of that event, and I recall the wonder of the great throng of admirers at his geniality, force, and dignity.

A letter from Lady Florence Dixie—a warm friend of his later years—that reached him on this occasion will be read with interest :

"Mrs. C. F. Smith kindly asked me to be present at the reception on your birthday. I wish it were possible.



. . . When I was a little girl I heard your praises sung at a large dinner party at Harleyford by my grandfather, Gen. Sir W. R. Clayton, my mother's father,<sup>1</sup> who was a great admirer of yours. 'Ijain' [Lady Dixie] was then six, and was seated on Disraeli's knee for dessert, eating almonds and raisins, and listening very attentively to the discussion of your merits and demerits. She sympathised with her grandfather's estimate of you, and, when Mr. Disraeli did not, she put up a tiny hand to his cheek and, pulling his face round, said: 'Mr. Disraeli, Ijain likes Mr. Holyoake too.'

Lady Dixie presented to the Rationalist Press Library a fine oil-portrait of Holyoake by his nephew. Another interesting letter that was read during the reception at South Place was from Herbert Spencer. Holyoake and he had seen much of each other at Brighton. They often drove or walked together, or discussed the universe together in the interstices of a game of billiards at Spencer's house. The aged philosopher was unable to attend at South Place, and he wrote:

"I can do nothing more than express my warm feeling of concurrence. Not dwelling upon his intellectual capacity, which is high, I would emphasise my appreciation of his courage, sincerity, truthfulness, philanthropy, and unwearied perseverance. Such a combination of these qualities it will, I think, be difficult to find."

Spencer himself was "slowing down into the station." A little later, when Holyoake sent him quiet birthday congratulations, he answered: "Thanks for your congratulations: but I should have liked better your condolences on my longevity." Him, too, Holyoake saw pass before him under the dark arch.

<sup>1</sup> Readers of *Ijain* may care to know that Lady Dixie observes in a note that "Marleyford" stands for Harleyford, and "Sir R. Railton" for General Clayton, in that story.

In the summer of 1902 he unveiled the monument that the Co-operators of England had raised over the grave of Robert Owen, and gave a noble address on the great reformer. Owen's grand-daughter (Rosamond Owen-Templeton) wrote him : "A faithful love is a beautiful thing, and you have loved my dear grandfather most faithfully." Later he gave assistance to Mr. Podmore in writing his *Life of R. Owen*, and, after a keen and protracted search, he unearthed a valuable quantity of Owen letters (3,000 in number) which he handed over to the Owen Memorial Committee, in whose hands they still await publication. When he wrote to approve Sir Leslie Stephen's article on Owen in the *Dictionary*, Sir Leslie replied : "I am glad that any writings of mine have been approved by so competent a judge, but I also feel ashamed that a man who has done so much active and strenuous work as you should give generous praise to me, who can only claim to be a literary looker-on. I ought to honour the real labourer, not to receive honour from him." I believe, however, that Holyoake resented the masterly phrase in which Stephen describes Owen as "one of those intolerable bores who are the salt of the earth."

In 1903 he unveiled a portrait of Mr. Hodgson Pratt, by Mr. Moscheles (who also painted Holyoake's portrait), at the Working Men's Club, and dwelt at length and generously on his social services. "I have given you no excuse for your generous pronouncement," Mr. Pratt wrote him, "but I am glad to think the working men had once more an opportunity of hearing your delightful eloquence." Later in the year he gave an address in the Rochdale Unitarian Church ; and in December a visit of Lord and Lady Brassey inspired him with one of his original ideas. "The Primrose League," he wrote, "is obsolete, unhistoric, waxworky, and inane. Why should

not Lady Brassey found a Mayflower League? That would be pretty, pertinent, historic, and inspiring. The Mayflower went out in search of liberty." "It is an inspiring suggestion," Lord Brassey replied.

With the beginning of 1904 his fresh chapters of reminiscences began to appear in the *Weekly Times and Echo*, and were then published as *Bygones*. I have already commented on the work, but the last chapter (which appeared in the *Fortnightly* at the end of 1903) is interesting here as an indication of his social optimism. It is one long and valuable appreciation of modern times in contrast to the old days he remembered so well. He never listened with patience to the phrase "good old times." He knew them. "The past had its evils; the present has fewer," was his sober verdict. His detailed contrast of the two extremes of the age he lived through has great value. Few of his elderly colleagues—Mr. Greening, Mr. Passmore Edwards, and Mr. H. Pratt were fine exceptions—saw such a bright sunset. Hodgson Pratt sent him two anecdotes to confirm his optimism. He had in his youth attended the Bath Grammar School, in the early days of Radicalism. "One morning, before the masters came in, all the desks were flung open as I entered, so that the inner side of the lids could be seen. On each appeared the following words in large letters: 'Down with Radicals—they stink.'" On another occasion his father (a Unitarian) was canvassing for Roebuck, and solicited for him the vote of the family shoemaker. The man exclaimed: "What! Vote for 'im! 'E don't believe in God nor devil."

"Some millionaire will be offering you a million for the secret of youthfulness," Mr. Greening wrote him, as his eighty-seventh birthday came round. Only three days afterwards Holyoake fell to the ground in a sudden attack of vertigo. But the warning was little heeded.

In January he had pressed Mr. Chamberlain to remit the tax that still remained on first-class railway fares. In March he appears in the new character of a "Passive Resister." "Cat and roses seized for priest-rates," he gaily notes in his diary. His picture was put up at auction, and he took the opportunity to make a speech there against the education-rate (on its religious side), and afterwards lectured on the subject to a small crowd on the open beach. He attended his last Co-operative Congress in May, and was elected a director of the Co-operative Newspaper Society. In June he made a speech at a meeting in honour of Paine, and the summer passed pleasantly, and with promise. In the autumn—ominously enough—the few notes scrawled in his diary are often upside down. His eyes were failing again. And year by year death was thinning the circle of his old friends. In 1904 it was the turn of Dr. Thomasson and Dr. Isaac Roberts.

Dr. Roberts was an assiduous correspondent of his during the few years before his death, and a few letters from him and others in 1904 are of interest. Dr. Roberts shared Holyoake's feeling in regard to theology. When Holyoake condoled with him on the death of his wife in 1901, he replied :

"We seem to be now as ever the playthings of some Being that permits us to blunder into the maximum of discomfort in life, and at the end has arranged that we must return to the state of unconscious atoms such as we were in before we were born. What is designated Revelation only makes darkness darker."

A few months before his death he wrote to Holyoake :

"MY DEAR JACOB HOLYOAKE,

"It is a pleasure to me to hear from and of you. I also know, by long experience and by reading, that

our aims in life are, and have in the past been, to acquire knowledge of ourselves first and knowledge of mankind in all its varied ramifications concurrently. . . . What would we do if we had the power? (1) Extend our lives in full physical health, strength, and vigour from this day onward to the year 3004. (2) Endow ourselves with vital force that would react, automatically, upon the human race, and cause them, during their respective span of life, to do NO EVIL either to themselves or to any other sentient being. (3) Make laws that would, immediately on the commission of an evil act, punish the transgressor in strict proportion to its magnitude, and give compensation to the injured without delay—the laws would be as the laws of nature. Imagine the torrent of invective that would flow upon us from every hole and corner throughout Christendom for daring to suggest such a simple remedy for evil!!”

Lord Hobhouse was another constant correspondent who shared Holyoake's views on religious questions. From 1899 onward he wrote many long and strong expressions of his feeling, though he was unwilling to have his name publicly linked with the Rationalist Press Association, which he materially aided. The attitude of the clergy during the war much embittered him. “With exceptions lamentably few,” he wrote, “they are tramping along the broad and easy road laid down by the strong, the rich, and the excitable multitude. It would seem that there are few except the despised Rationalists and Agnostics to maintain that the moral law is the same for nations as for individuals.” But his rejection of theology had other than sentimental grounds, as the letter I quoted earlier indicates. He hardly shared Holyoake's optimism, but greatly admired him, and enjoyed his letters. “You infuse,” he said, “so beneficial an energy into men's thoughts that I cannot help hoping you may still have before you much time in which to

work." For his own part he had "sat long enough at the feast of life, and, though not very impatient for the end, was ready for it." He corresponded with Holyoake until his death, in 1904.

Earl Grey's correspondence with him increased in his later years. The knowledge that so able a statesman was not merely interested in Co-operative matters, but a zealous advocate of co-partnership, gave him great comfort. In 1900 he wrote to Holyoake :

"DEAR MR. HOLYOAKE,

"Your inscription, to be pasted into your history of the Derby Society, gives the volume a greatly increased value. There is an originality about your handwriting, and a refreshing even if too flattering courtesy about your phraseology, which give a peculiar charm to your manuscript.

"Now let me take you into my confidence *re* a work of art which is being made for me, and which, when finished, will give in a manner worthy of your life's work and of your hopes *your* message to the world. My artist friend is putting his whole energy into the effort to show, in a manner so clear that everyone will understand, the difference between the selfishness, ignorance, and tyranny of the old industrial system and the beauty of the new. At the base of the plaque, modelled in bronze, Capital, which is represented by a powerful autocrat, Michel-Angelesque in power and authority, is driving mercilessly blind slaves, who are harnessed to his chariot by chains. The road is strewn with the corpses of the fallen, and those who are endeavouring to raise themselves and looking towards the light are being thrust down by another incarnation of capital, a masterful and pitiless giant, admirably executed. Above this representation of the mercilessness of capital and the sufferings of labour is a great dragon, symbolical of the ignorance which blinds the eyes of the capitalist and slave.

"Then the artist endeavours to convey the idea of the

services performed by those who, one by one, have fastened a fetter on some portion of the huge dragon of ignorance, thereby and to that extent reducing his power for evil. Small figures they are, tugging and striving to chain down under the rock of Truth the pestilent dragon, each working at a separate coil. I want your advice as to who these enchainers of ignorance should be made to represent. Christ and Mazzini must be two of them. Who shall the other two be? I would like to put you as one of them, and perhaps Owen, but I am not sure about him. Please give me your ideas. I want the four men who have opened the eyes of mankind most widely to the truths of human brotherhood. Then on the top of the square rock of Truth, at the foot of which the enchained dragon of ignorance lies writhing in impotence, stand a young man and a young woman, Capital and Labour, the two made one, from whose eyes the figure of Knowledge, standing behind them, is lifting a veil; and they are gazing into the sky illumined by the glory of the sun, in which they see represented the eternal harmonies, and the peace and the beauties of love. . . .”

Holyoake seems to have deprecated the honour, and Earl Grey then suggests “Christ, Milton, Mazzini, and Darwin;” but it was finally decided not to connect “the message” with any individuals. When Holyoake wrote some words of appreciation Lord Grey answered :

“I cannot thank you sufficiently for your letter, or express to you how much I value the kind and appreciative expressions towards myself which it contains. It is a great honour and encouragement to me that you should have so written to me.

“I remain,  
“Your grateful follower,  
“GREY.”

“To be thus described by you,” he wrote in 1904, “is to be knighted in the Co-operative Realm, of which you,

by merit, soul, enthusiasm, and splendid courage, as well as age, are the rightful Sovereign. May you long live to guide us, your Co-operative subjects, with your counsel and to inspire us with your faith."

The last letter, written when Earl Grey was about to start for Canada, begins :

"There are no letters I enjoy more than yours. They are always full of buoyancy and faith and hope and courage. I hope I shall see you before I go to Canada to say 'good-bye,' and to thank you for all the encouragement and inspiration which your example has been to me for many years."

Goldwin Smith's last letters to Holyoake confirm with some reserve the optimistic pages of his *Bygones*. He admires the sketch of Gladstone—complaining that Morley was "under the spell" when he wrote his final volume—and that of Disraeli. The latter chapter leads him to revive, in an interesting way, the sudden departure of Garibaldi.

"Garibaldi was coming to my house at Oxford when he was whisked away. I think I can guess the reason. He was odious as an overturner of thrones. A friend of mine heard Disraeli flattering the occupant of a throne by slandering Garibaldi."

The allusion is clear enough. "This for your private ear," Goldwin Smith says ; but a later letter removes the restriction. On April 26th (1905) he writes :

"When the calumnious allusion was attested [contested?] by Disraeli's late secretary and his literary executor, Lord Rowton, I thought it was right to put the contradiction on record ; especially as an authorised life of Disraeli is proclaimed to be in preparation, and I may probably be gone before it appears."



The publication of *Bygones* (January, 1905) brought a last shower of literary letters. Sir Lewis Morris wrote :

" It is not often nowadays that I receive so appreciative a notice, and it is all the more acceptable in that it comes from one with whose opinions in politics and, to a great extent, in religious matters, I am so greatly in accord. I agree with you that the present Laureate was *not* in the running for the post when he was appointed, and I lament, in the interests of literature, that our late leader did not add to his many good gifts that of literary achievement, either in prose or verse. It was news to me that the application to write the Co-operative Ode in 1888 came as the result of a recommendation by my good friend and master Lord Tennyson, who often expressed his wish, which Gladstone was induced to disregard, that I should be his successor."

By this time the end was in sight, and the annual engagements were reluctantly declined. Early in February he wrote in his diary : " Felt often of late like one approaching the edge of the world—but see no more than others what lies beyond." The Rationalist Press dinner and the Leicester festival missed him for the first time, and the Co-operators were told that there would be one more breach in the ranks of their veterans. He had told Greening in 1904 that the Congress that year would probably be his last. Scottish Co-operators were amongst his most ardent admirers, and were concerned that they would not have him at Paisley. " I am urged," Greening wrote him, " to use my best persuasive powers to induce you, if at all possible and if your health permits, to come to the Congress *this year*, as there is a strong desire on the part of the Co-operators in Scotland to mark their appreciation of the lifelong services you have rendered to the cause, by presenting you *at the Congress* with an address in some form or other showing the high

esteem in which you and your labours are held." The provost of Paisley was anxious to entertain him. When, eventually, he failed to come, the Congress was deeply moved, and a resolution was passed and telegraphed to him :

"That this Congress sends hearty message of sympathy to Mr. George Jacob Holyoake on his enforced absence from Congress owing to advanced age and also congratulates him on the attainment of his 88th birthday, hoping that he may be spared for many years in the enjoyment of his physical and mental powers which in the past have been so earnestly devoted to the cause of the people."

The concluding words were singularly happy. They must have recalled to his mind the hopeful charge that he made into the ranks of the enemy under that ensign (*Cause of the People*) sixty years before. In that journal he had pleaded the forlorn cause of "association." Now a Congress representing two million and a quarter members and a capital of more than forty million pounds was greeting him in his last days. Few sowers of the seed of progress ever saw so rich a harvest, when they had sown in such stony soil. In the summer it was the turn of the smaller band of Profit-sharers, with whom he was so closely allied, to miss his venerable figure, and send their greeting :

"Co-partnership workers miss you, but rejoice at your continued work for our principles, and greet you as their leader in industrial freedom."

On the political side, too, his last year had consolation, when the Brighton election came round. His last effort was made for Liberalism. He penned an ardent appeal to his fellow townsmen to oust the Conservative member for Brighton, and he had himself driven in a

carriage to cast his vote. It was a joy to him to find the long contest with his political opponents end triumphantly. The candidate he appealed for, Villiers, was returned with a majority of 800.

The letters of his last year show a remarkable mental force and balance. He had written in May to complain to his old friend Mr. Hale White of ominous symptoms in the extremities. "Never mind the feet," White answered; "better that end of the body than the other. You remember poor Swift's horror at the thought that, like a tree, he should die at the top first. Your top seems to me pretty much what it was half a century ago."

His last notes have all the characteristic ring. In June he wrote to Mr. R. J. Campbell:

"Could I write with the effortless grace of your review of my book in the *Young Man*, I could tell you with what pleasure I read it. Generous terms are not to be taken as the measure of desert, but of endeavour. Thus I recognised its friendliness and wholesomeness, for I am still a young man in my mind, and prize incentives to improvement. Than these qualities I know no higher praise of a sermon or a review."

To Mr. Passmore Edwards he wrote in November:

"I wish I had read 'Footsteps' [a work recently published by Mr. Edwards] when writing the passages concerning you in *Bygones*. The title 'Footsteps' is fresh—there are phrases of mastery in the story, where candour and boldness are charms. Your 'Footsteps' will reverberate in the corridors of time."

In the early part of the year he had some thought of having cataract removed by Mr. Brudenell Carter, who expressed friendly willingness, but the medical men dissuaded him, and he was afflicted by comparative failure of both sight and hearing. His bed was removed to the library in April, but his friends were gratified to

hear of an improvement in his health in May, and for some time he went out occasionally in a bath-chair. In August, in fact, he notes that he has just "finished 'History of Co-operation in Great Britain'"—the enlarged edition of it—though he had to leave it to his daughter to see through the press. "Read Balzac and Boccaccio" is another interesting entry. He wrote also some articles on longevity in the *Daily Chronicle*, and even ventured to London. "Mr. George Jacob Holyoake was at the National Liberal Club on Wednesday [August 9th] looking hale and hearty at the age of 88," a London paper announced.

On the first Monday in September he notes that he is "preparing article on Woman Suffrage for *Nineteenth Century*," but on the following day he writes: "Numbness, coldness, pain in feet more than of late." Save for a few letters in the *Co-operative News* and elsewhere, his work was over. A few domestic entries occur in the diary until the middle of October, and then the long silence sets in, though life was to linger for a few months. What were his thoughts during those last weeks when he saw the gates of eternity slowly opening? Was there any wavering, any dimness, of the convictions he had so long and so courageously preached? His friend and medical attendant, Dr. Ryle, has written an interesting account of him in his last illness, when death was visibly approaching:

"During the last illness of Mr. Holyoake's life reference was occasionally made to subjects connected with religious belief, but I do not remember any conversation expressly about the question of a future life. The impression which he left upon my mind as to his views was that he held the opinions which are expressed in his article upon Secularism in *Chambers' Encyclopædia*, and in his pamphlet entitled *The Logic of Death*. I never

heard him express any belief in a future life. He alluded incidentally once or twice to the end of his life as not far distant, but did not dwell upon the topic. He was usually decidedly cheerful, and was always ready and willing to discuss matters in which he took an interest. He always spoke as though he were still an active man, still taking a part in the cause of progress. His criticisms on current politics and political personalities were always shrewd and clear. He was a steady worker almost to the end. I generally found him standing reading with a magnifying glass near the window. The work on which he was generally occupied was that which had been the work of his life. Either the cause of Co-operation or that of intellectual progress and freedom in some form was always uppermost in his mind. . . .

"In his personal character the feature which struck me most was his great fund of charity and his kindly good nature. Although he had been all his life an agitator or a fighter, and had always been upon the side of the rebel against mere thoughtless respectability, yet he had no bitterness in his soul. He cherished no spite, and always had a genial word for the most obstructive Tory or the most bigoted obscurantist. The following sentence, in which he described his own attitude of mind towards that orthodox world from which he had in early life suffered much, was as true of him at the end of his life as, I believe, it was in his most strenuous days. I quote from his paper entitled *The Logic of Death* (100th edition): 'I love the world in spite of its frowning moods. For years I have felt neither anger nor hatred of any living being, and I will not advisedly resuscitate those distorting passions through which we see the errors of each other as crimes.'"

It is, I suppose, natural for those who attach supreme importance to one or other aspect of Christian teaching to be reluctant to admit altitude of character in one who did not share it, and to seek feverishly for some expression

of faith in the Agnostic's last days. In the case of George Jacob Holyoake there was not even an ambiguous word to build such a hope upon. I have seen the last words that his enfeebled fingers scrawled, while the night was closing upon him, on the subject of religious beliefs. To the end he held the convictions of his manhood. The last, loosely-pencilled lines in his pocket-book are merely a repetition of his creed in *The Origin and Nature of Secularism*. If death were the uprolling of a curtain on a new world, as well as the fall of one on this world, he was content—he had to be content—to wait and see. To the last he saw only one world, the world of his bodily eyes and his human affections. It held problems enough, and he felt no regret that he had turned away from the perplexing riddles of the beyond to give his whole soul to humanity's advance.

He was happy to the end in his faith. Great weakness came to him in the last months, and occasional pain, but he was manful. He must have known that men would say over his ashes, not merely that he had left, but that he had made, the world better than he found it. The greater portion of his early dreams had been realised. In the early winter he would sit for hours at the window of his study looking over the southern sea. His eyes were jealous only that they would never see the noble and beautiful forms that prepared to rise on that far horizon. There was no room for regret. "Honour is the wine of age," he had said long before. He had had much of it, and with it an affection that few commanded. Death came slowly, with long warning. About the end of 1905 he sent for Greening. His old friend had trouble to control himself for the last meeting, but Holyoake met him cheerfully, and, gently dismissing his wife, discussed with him the end and what was to follow. "I have cared more for Co-operation than for

any other public movement" was his decision, as they talked over the long struggles they had seen and shared. A little later he took leave of another old and esteemed friend, Robert Applegarth ;

"I have warmed both hands at the fire of life.  
It sinks, and I am ready to depart,"

he said to Applegarth, in the words of W. S. Landor.

Before the end of the month it was clear that his days were numbered. On Christmas-day he had dinner with his daughter (Mrs. Holyoake-Marsh) in his library, where his bed was placed ; for he was minded to die amongst his books, and, if possible, to work to the end. Below were Mrs. Holyoake and Mr. A. Marsh, his son-in-law, who, ever proud of his association with the great reformer, had tendered him the devoted and thoughtful attention of a son in his later years. After that day he slowly sank. Finely enough, his last vitality was spent on the Liberal struggle at the polls in January, 1906. Before the end of December the constitution of the Liberal Cabinet was announced, and he wrote to Mr. Burns and to Sir H. Campbell-Bannerman. To see the country once more entrusted to the men he knew and admired—Grey, Morley, Campbell-Bannerman, etc.—was a welcome sight to his failing eyes ; but that a working man should be associated with them in the Cabinet was a remarkable fulfilment of his hope for the workers. His letter to Mr. Burns runs (December 28th) :

"Permit one whom age has shorn of nimbleness to bring tardily in the rear of the 3,000 his tribute of congratulation. Was he not one of the first to see that thou had'st a star, now in the ascendant, shining with Cabinet radiance over the land? Now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace, for his eye hath seen industrial<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> The word "industrial" was omitted by some papers that published the letter.

salvation. The great proof of this is that 3,000 of thy compeers, casting aside the envy of despair, the jealousies of ignorance, send thee ungrudging word of their gladness and support."

"Many thanks for your kind letter of congratulation," Mr. Burns replied. "It is indeed a great honour to receive from you such good wishes, and no effort of mine will be spared to deserve them."

As the elections drew near he fought the increasing weakness with a last effort to aid and to witness progress. From his death-bed he dictated a vigorous and lucid appeal to the workers of England to return the Liberals to power. It was not the appeal of the party politician, for he would never live to share the prestige of his party. He thought that grave national issues were at stake, and for the last time, standing under the very shadow of the solemn arch of death, he turned to address his fellows. His letter filled nearly a column of the *Star* on the eve of the elections. Shortly after it had been dictated the drowsiness of death began to fall on him. For the fortnight from January 7th to 22nd he lay generally in a comatose condition, tended by his wife and daughter. Occasionally the tired eyes opened once more, and the dying fire broke out in faint flashes, as he returned for a moment to the world of men. How were the elections going? Then came the succession of telegrams from all parts of the country putting the Liberal victory in security from the first, and he lay down with serenity. He had come into conscious life amid the resounding struggle of the workers for political power; he passed slowly out of it amidst the cry of a great democratic victory. He died peacefully, in the presence of his wife and daughter, on January 22nd.



## CHAPTER XXX

### THE MAN AND HIS WORK

HOLYOAKE was emphatically one of those public men who care what their fellows mutter to each other, or cry from the house-tops, when their own ears are closed for ever. A dozen maxims of charity often lie, like sound-proof walls, between the aged worker and the generation about him ; and when the nerve has ceased to quiver, and pain is no more, the walls gently break, and the truth falls on the dead ears. We say nothing but good of the dead, but we have many ways of saying it, and it is not vanity to trust that the world will utter frank appreciation over your remains, and not merely whisper the chilly maxim of prudence or the faint praise of indulgence. It is only the biassed lover who speaks sweet things while we live. What will be the sober verdict of our age?

With those remarkable bundles of letters about him from men who were no idle flatterers or mean judges, Holyoake can have had little serious misgiving. We will hope he had not. He knew well that from certain obscure quarters depreciation, if not calumny, would come ; or, at least, the nicely calculated compliments that are but intended to show the generosity of the giver. For that he cared little. But for the broad judgment of his time he cared.

Whatever his feeling may have been, the news of his death, flashing along the nerves of England, and then

of Europe, on that January morning, evoked a great chorus of sympathy and appreciation. One must indeed make some allowance for the picturesqueness of his character and his career, in estimating the journalistic tribute to him. His story made fine "copy." But the virtual unanimity in respect for his person and appreciation of his efforts was very gratifying. One paper—a Socialist organ—maligned him; one other—a Secularist organ—damned him with faint praise. And it was for the cause of the people he had done most, and for the cause of free-thought he had forfeited most. Otherwise the broad and frank eulogy was a fitting crown to his career. Conservative and clerical journals were little less generous in attributing to him character and ideal than those other journals that were able to rejoice in the effect of his exertions.

The study of his personality and influence may well be completed by adducing a few of the verdicts that were pronounced on him, as his memory passed the great tribunal of obituary journalism; nor will his admirers be ungrateful to have a few of the more important gathered for their preservation. Out of the immense number of notices it is possible to quote a few only, and we choose the less partial or those that have more weight. The Conservative journals confined themselves to long and respectful records of his career, on the whole, though the *Standard* described him as "a remarkable personality who exercised a powerful influence both on the intellectual thought and on the social and political development of the times in which he lived"; the *Telegraph* wrote of him as "one of the foremost of his time . . . a kindly, well-intentioned man"; and the *Pall Mall Gazette* thought it "impossible not to respect him and the general sum of his achievements." The estimate of the Liberal press is of value

in measuring his political service. He took "a full and gallant part in the political and social emancipation of England," said the *Tribune*; and it gave a fine and enthusiastic record of his career from the pen of his Liberal friend, Mr. A. E. Fletcher. "He helped to build a better society, and was a Secularist who followed the golden rule better than most Christians," wrote the *Daily News*. "One of England's Grand Old Men," the *Chronicle* described him, "an inspiring figure."

Non-political journals of all kinds paid tribute to his character and endeavours. "A deeply conscientious man," said the *Daily Graphic*, "ready at all periods of his life to suffer in what he held to be the cause of justice." "Those who have enjoyed his friendship know what a privilege it was," Mr. Francis wrote in the *Athenæum*; and the *Academy* generously declared: "Agitator, socialist, free-thinker, fire-brand, he lived through the evil days of a time that happily has passed, the passing of which was due to no one man in so great a measure as to him." "A life-long reformer, notable alike for his high character, courage, consistency, and disinterestedness," said the *Spectator*. "His services to free thought and honest thought were immense," said the *Sphere*. "One of the great workers of the nineteenth century" (*Book and News Gazette*), "generally respected by all thinking sections of his countrymen" (*Publishers' Circular*), "a long and honourable life" (*Black and White*), are other expressions in the neutral London papers. Even many religious journals were generous. The *Methodist Times* spoke of his high character and "his long life of strenuous labour for freedom"; though that journal was quite wrong in saying that in his later years he "largely modified his position towards Christianity." The *Christian Life* concluded a warm tribute with the words: "He was an untiring servant of the public good. It is not only

those who know God with our knowledge, but those also whom God knoweth far better than we, of whom we may reverently and confidently say : 'Servant of God, well done.'"

It is impossible and needless to summarise the echoes of these sentiments in the provincial press and abroad. The *Birmingham Post*, on which he had worked until it became Unionist, expressed in a most generous leader the esteem he had won in the city of his precarious youth. It spoke of his "public life of unceasing activity, prompted, as friends and opponents will alike concede, by the most generous and unselfish impulses . . . infused with lofty altruism and kindly humanity." The *Brighton Herald* was no less generous in recording the feeling of the town in which his later years were spent : "His opinions on many vital matters may be the object of vehement dislike, but not even his detractors can deny admiration for that love of freedom which was the passion of his life, for the sacrifices which he made fearlessly on its behalf, and for his unceasing endeavours on behalf of the social amelioration of his toiling fellow countrymen." Scores of the leading continental journals also spoke at length, and with deep respect, of Holyoake and his life, copying from each other until he thinned into a legendary hero in remote Italian towns.<sup>1</sup> To the *Secolo* (the *Vorwärts* also spoke well of him) he was "one of the greatest economists, journalists, and agitators in England." The *Journal de Genève* found his "influence so great and remarkable, and his active life so long, that in speaking of him one seems to be dealing with a legendary person." The *Schweizer Protestantsblatt* (which,

<sup>1</sup> A small Italian provincial paper has an article headed "The Death of a Famous English Thinker." His name was "Georgio Jacob Aholyoacke." He was the founder of "Secularism, a species of mathematical philosophy," and was condemned to a fine of £600,000 "for editing the *Creasener*."

however, fancies he was a Unitarian) finely says : " His name means ' holy oak,' and there was something of a venerable oak in his life." Most of the Swiss and French papers, and many in Germany and Holland, wrote of him at length.

It would be superfluous to speak of tributes to him in the organs of those movements which he still led at the time of his death—the *Literary Guide* (the Rationalist organ) and the *Co-operative News*. " The grand Old Man of the Co-operative Movement," the *News* calls him ; and it adds : " What he was to the cause of Co-operation we can hardly attempt to describe. His patience and fidelity gained universal admiration, and at the same time reflected honour upon the movement and upon his colleagues." Nor was there less deep regard expressed in the organs of continental Co-operation. One of the most beautiful of all the eulogies of the time was the editorial article of *Il Nostro Giornale* (organ of the Milan Co-operators), which devoted its whole issue to Holyoake and his work. " Holyoake, the glorious pupil of Robert Owen, the world-known Co-operator, the formidable propagandist, the historian of the Pioneers, the friend of Garibaldi and Mazzini, the lover of humanity, the venerated master, is no more," was the opening note of a singularly fine appreciation. He has had ample reward for his love and service for Italy. " In 'George Jacob Holyoake," said the Swiss organ (*Schweitzer Consum-Verein*), " England loses one of the most interesting and remarkable men that she has produced in the nineteenth century. . . . The co-operators of Switzerland bend in spirit over his bier with the deepest regard and gratitude." The French organ (*L'Union Co-opérative*) said that " in writing the history of Co-operation, he wrote the history of his life ;" the German organ (*Genossenschaftliches Volks-Blatt*) spoke of him as " the Nestor

of British Co-operation" and "a pioneer in the history of Democracy and Co-operation."

The other movements for which he had worked were not less appreciative. The political committee of the National Liberal Club passed the resolution :—

"That this committee record their sense of the irreparable loss sustained by the club and the cause of liberty and progress by the lamented death of Mr. G. J. Holyoake, the unswerving champion for nearly seventy years of the people's rights. The committee regard his life's work as a conspicuous example and memorial of the triumph of character and of unselfish devotion to high and noble aims."

From Rationalists the tributes were innumerable. I will quote only two, a letter that Mr. George Meredith wrote (to be read at the Rationalist Press dinner in April) and an ode by Eden Phillpotts. Mr. Meredith wrote :

"DEAR SIR,

"The privilege proposed to me of being among you at your annual gathering this year would have been hailed in acception the more readily for the opportunity I should have had to offer my tribute to the memory of George Jacob Holyoake, one of the truly great Englishmen of our time. From his earliest days as a worker he spoke for the poor, who could not speak for themselves; and for the uninstructed, too timid to think for themselves. Much is owing to him that England is no longer regarded on the Continent as the backward country in relation to Freethought, and that the term 'Freethinker' ceases to imply a holy reproach, a warning to infants and the craven. Even Churchmen have been known to allude to him with consideration. By sober persistency, the result of a profound conviction as to the truth of his cause, he succeeded at last in conquering hostile opinion; and, that being English, it will be owned that he did

nothing less than disintegrate a granite rock. Such men as he are the backbone of our land. They are not eulogised in monuments ; they have a stouter memorial in the hearts of all who venerate a simple devotion to the oppressed, the labours of a clear intelligence, contempt of material rewards, and unflinching courage.

“ Yours truly,

“ GEORGE MEREDITH.”

In the memorial number of the *Literary Guide* appeared the following tribute from Mr. Eden Phillpotts :

“ HOLYOAKE (1817—1906).

“Thou glorious Titan, art thou gone at last?  
Shall the embattled peal thy name no more?  
Must the majestic spirit that of yore  
Made thy young heart a home be now outcast?  
Ah, never ! with thy passing hath not passed  
The truth eternal that thou suffer'dst for.  
Never again shall clang the iron door  
Thy bleeding hands thrust open and held fast.  
Servant of Man, well done ! The great unborn  
Shall thunder forth thine honour in that light,  
Whose radiant and unutterable morn  
Thy life has hastened over Freedom's night,  
And o'er the upward pathway thou hast worn  
Thy steadfast name shall blaze, a star of night.”

At the cremation of his remains all these diverse elements were brought together in an accord of sympathy. Never shall I forget the remarkable spectacle that was then witnessed in the little chapel of the Golder's Green crematorium. The white coffin—characteristically, he had forbidden black—was wrapped in the faded Garibaldian flag that recalled the most dramatic stage of his career, and was borne through a dense crowd that bore eloquent witness, in its infinite variety, to his broad philanthropy. Well-known men—such as Mr. John Burns, Dr. Clifford, M. de Boyve, Dr. Eugen Oswald, Mr. Ralph Neville, Mr. Maddison, Mr. Morrell—stood out from the packed

mass of Co-operators, Profit-sharers, Rationalists, Secularists, Positivists, Ethicists, Sunday Leaguers, Trades Unionists, journalists, politicians, etc. The Co-operative Union had sent 80 delegates from Manchester; the Wholesale, the *News*, the Italian and French bodies, and 170 British Societies and Women's Guilds were represented, or sent letters. The Liberal Club sent its secretary, with Mr. Fletcher and Mr. Thompson. The *Times* observed that the crowd "seemed to represent all classes of the community." The really honouring feature was that it represented every facet of idealism in the community, and bore witness to the dead man's broad sympathies. On one side of me stood two fervent delegates from Italy—on the other Mr. Donald Murray and Mr. A. E. Fletcher; before me was an atheist—behind me a clergyman, and behind him a theosophist and a socialist. And when the brief, representative addresses were over, and Mr. E. O. Greening had murmured the last greeting, the dense throng looked on with deepest reverence and emotion while the remains of the son of a Midland ironworker passed, with princely ceremony, through the bronze gates.<sup>1</sup>

On the following day, Sunday, a larger crowd attended the memorial service at the historic South Place Chapel, where he had long ago listened to the eloquence of W. J. Fox, and had often spoken himself in later years. An impressive service, of an ethical character, was conducted by Mr. J. A. Hobson, and funeral orations were delivered by him and by the present writer. In the evening a memorial service was held in the New Road Church at Brighton. A small group of personal friends saw his ashes committed to the grave in Highgate Cemetery on

<sup>1</sup> There was no religious service. Mr. Greening, Mr. Gray, and Mr. Vivian spoke for his Co-operative followers, Mr. A. E. Fletcher for Liberalism, Mr. Gimson for the Leicester Secular Society, and Mr. McCabe for the Rationalist Press Association.





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the Monday by Dr. Charles Read. He had purchased, some years before, a plot of ground close to the graves of his early friends, George Eliot and George H. Lewes.

More recently (November 9th, 1907) the Co-operators of Great Britain have erected an impressive monument over his ashes, with a fine and striking bust by Mr. Toft. On that occasion Dr. Clifford maintained the excellent tradition of liberal feeling towards the great Secularist by delivering an eloquent appreciation of his character and of his Co-operative and social work. Unconsciously repeating a phrase that had occurred to more than one, he spoke of Holyoake as a Moses that had led the workers of England out of the desert. But this was only a small instalment of the honour that the Co-operators of England are preparing to the memory of their leader. A fund of some £25,000 has been subscribed throughout the movement (at the rate of three-pence per member), land has been purchased in Manchester, and within a few years "Holyoake House" will be numbered amongst the monuments of that city. The structure will become the headquarters—socially and educationally—of the Co-operative movement, and thus his name will be enshrined for centuries to come in the lives of Co-operators. There were moments when he looked on many of the branches with sadness, or even made pungent phrases on them; but the whole body has done, or is in train to do, princely honour to its early apostle and strenuous propagandist.

\* \* \* \* \*

When W. L. Sargant wrote the biography of Holyoake's great master, within a year of his death, he felt it needful to apologise for writing at length on so obscure a man. "The good Owen did had been interred before his bones," he observed. We need make no apology for having written the life of the greatest of his disciples.

Though he outlived two generations, he did not outlive his services to his fellows. He died the venerated master of more than one great movement, the remembered pioneer in a hundred others, the esteemed friend of many of our most prominent politicians, social workers, and men of letters. Yet his long career stretched so far back beyond the earliest memory of our generation, and the enterprises of his early manhood fall in a world so different from that about us to-day, that we may well, in conclusion, essay to form a summary estimate of his services to society and the evolution of his character.

To appreciate, in the first place, the improvement that has, somehow or other, taken place during the nineteenth century, consider the life of a worker in the days when young Holyoake first felt the restlessness of his apostleship dragging him from the lathe. I have described it at some length in the early chapters. He found himself an almost helpless wheel in a pitiless industrial machine. From six on the Monday morning until six on the Saturday evening he swung his hammer, or handled his trowel, under the eye of a despotic master. His recreations were few and coarse: his education puerile or none: his children dragged into the machine beside him, with nerve, muscle, and brain undeveloped, at the age of nine. Men spoke to him of the power he might have if he would associate with his brawny fellows the land over; but every attempt to do it brought a swarm of dragoons from his rulers. He understood there was a bright world of art and culture beyond, but his stunted powers and long, exacting labour shut him out of it. He heard that he was a citizen of a great kingdom, but every claim of citizenship was silenced with troopers' sabres. He could not travel, except on foot; he could not read, unless he and his children ate less. The economist could

only tell him that he was a producer ; the statesman was content to have him a beer-sodden brawler for Church and King ; and the parson urged him to be content in the station to which he was called.

Who can measure the revolution that has taken place in the life of the worker since 1830? Shorter hours and better conditions of labour : free, palatial schools for his children, with a fair opportunity for secondary education : magnificent collections of art and books and scientific objects wide open to him in his leisure hours : a literature of unbounded prodigality and of whatever quality he cares to demand in it : cheap and comfortable travel : cheaper and better food, with higher wages and better homes : full freedom to discuss his political, religious, or industrial conditions, to enter into trade-combinations, to say what he pleases of Church and State, to put his hand on the very regulators of the civic and national machinery. The evolution of travel since 1830 is typical of the whole life of the worker. We see him at first breaking with difficulty from his industrial centre, and making his way afoot to some far-off town in search of independence, or of congenial spirits. Twenty years later he can use the iron-roads that span the country : but standing in an open truck, like cattle, creeping slowly from station to station, shunted aside to make way for his betters. Then a roof is put over his truck, and seats are put in it : though the rain and snow beat in on him through the open window, and his third-class train is the pariah of the railway. To-day he can run from London to Glasgow and back, of a week end, in luxurious heated carriages, for a little over thirty shillings. Apply that same measure of improvement to his education, his political and civic status, his recreations, and his social conditions generally, and you have an idea of the height he has ascended since 1830.

Those who fancy they have the reason for all this in some elusive law of evolution are playing with scientific terms that they do not understand. Evolution describes the procession : it does not tell the motive force. The working men have reached the higher plane because they have marched to it, under the inspiration of their leaders and their prophets. Deluded prophets they often were, leading them to Utopia ; but the road to Utopia often lies *through* the better land, and they were brought nearer to it.

Holyoake's share in leading this march of the workers, in detecting true paths, and clearing away obstacles, was one that, I fancy, the future social historian will appraise higher than any of us do to-day. Before he was out of his teens he was a Chartist, an Owenite, and a Trade Unionist. In other words, he dedicated his life to breaking the shackles that bound the worker in his time, to secure education, better industrial conditions, freedom of speech, deliberateness of conviction, political power, and the right of association. Every one of these has been secured, and in the agitation for each he held a prominent place. His service in the formation of the Co-operative Movement has only to be mentioned. A convincing journalist and lecturer, he urged the Co-operative idea for sixty years, and the whole of Co-operative Europe called him master ; nor must it be forgotten that he urged incessantly that the profit arising from the practice of association should go largely in education and in improving the condition of employees. In education itself his influence is easily perceived, though not easily measured. When we put together his early teaching, his educational treatises for young men, his unflinching appeals by pen and voice, his association with Ellis, with Fox and the northerners, with Forster and the Yorkshire enthusiasts, with four educational Leagues,

and with nearly every single London worker for education, we must grant him a good share in securing our national scheme of education. In regard to Trade Unionism, it will be recalled that his first pamphlet urged the principle ; that he was the first explicit Labour candidate ; and that his last act was to greet a Labour Minister. The development of his work took him too far afield to claim much influence in this, but the workers' associations in Brighton know his ready sympathy.

In the political field few modern politicians would seek his influence, but that is merely because they are of a later generation. In any appreciation of the evolution of modern Liberalism out of the remnants of Chartism, Radicalism, and moderate Whiggism he will find a distinct place. He had great influence in the transformation of the Chartist into the Radical, and no mean influence in the coalition of Radicals and progressive Whigs. We have seen how his political work was appreciated by such judges as Thornton Hunt, J. S. Mill, W. J. Fox, J. Cowen, and even Bright. Fifty years of consistent lecturing, journalism, pamphleteering, and electoral work in the Liberal cause are no light record ; and to this must be added his vast political correspondence, and his relations with so many ministers. In his time the son of the worker was a *parvenu* of the political world, an ominous intruder, regarded much as the early manufacturer was amongst the landed gentry. Holyoake's career was one of the most effective in breaking that tradition. He would probably have failed in the House of Commons, even had there been no oath-barrier to keep him out of it. But the respect he won by his sober judgment, high character, and moderation enabled him to exercise a very great influence outside it. A few instances may be recalled from the course of our narrative. He did more than any other single worker to

destroy Palmerston's Bill in a few days in 1858 : to ensure the adoption of the ballot in 1871 : and to secure the abandonment of the tax on third-class fares in 1883. These are instances, out of many, of the real influence he used from without ; but, as I said, his great service was in political education.

His services to the cause of freethought are of a nature that many readers would rather hope to find insignificant, but they form a part of the serious work he set out to do, and must be briefly noticed. Here, indeed, we are particularly apt to find men making large claims who were little more than flies on the wheel. It was the growth of scientific culture and historical criticism and the spread of education that had so disintegrating an effect on the earlier religious beliefs. Holyoake's work was to popularise this advanced knowledge, and we saw that, to the constant regret of most of his friends, he never laid aside that work. Rationalists generally will probably claim two outstanding services for him in this department. From 1842 until 1860 he was the acknowledged leader of freethinkers in this country, and the vast amount of educative and organising work done in that difficult period was overwhelmingly due to him. He founded the National Secular Society : Mr. Bradlaugh named it, and developed it. In the next thirty years his great service was his stern insistence that there should be no criticism without character, culture, taste, and consideration for others. He failed in the specific aim he had before him, but he kept that ideal intact, until a new organisation was ready to embody it. These, and the splendid fight he waged for free speech, the sacrifices he made for honour and truth, the securing of the option to affirm instead of swearing, the vindication in his own fine character of humanist morality, are the great services he rendered to his Agnostic followers.



From first to last he held a prominent position on the executive of twenty-two different progressive Leagues or Associations, and even these do not exhaust the list of his voluntary services in the cause of progress. His first public act was the incurring of an ignominious imprisonment, which he could easily have evaded, in support of the right of free speech, and he was one of the most daring and persistent champions in the freeing of journalism from indirect government control. He was incontestably the chief worker in securing cheap and decent travel for the working man, and in obtaining for him such assistance as he had until recently to guide the steps of the emigrant. He was, after Mill, the greatest pioneer of the modern woman-movement, and nearly all the ladies who fought its early battles in this country sought his aid and inspiration. He was a powerful early advocate of the free Sunday. He was ever an enthusiastic and effective worker in the creation of international amity. From his early appeal for the slaves and the American abolitionists to those late appeals for Ireland that won him the regard of Davitt and Justin McCarthy—through all his efforts on behalf of the liberators of France, Italy, Hungary, and Poland—he sought the frank recognition of the brotherhood of men. He followed Owen from the first in preaching the substitution of arbitration for war; and even in that more trying warfare of religious controversy in which he was constrained to engage he gave a rare example of chivalry.

They who write the lives of great statesmen are often puzzled to separate the accomplishment from the feeling of the age that permitted it. Our task is easier. Holyoake was a man who set out in life with distinguished ability, an inheritance of ideals, and formidable difficulties to surmount in realising them. Nervous, sensitive, of

frail physique, he never shrank from the task, or compounded with his aim. Twice his life was endangered, twice blindness threatened him ; but he worked until the year of his death for what he believed to be the good of humanity. And into that rough world of the pioneer and the settler and the disturber of respectable folk he took, and kept unblunted, the refinement, chivalry, sobriety, and cheerfulness of his temper and the unyielding straightness of his character. He chose his work well, and he did it well ; and the vast stretch of the social scale that lies between the gaunt, livid, pike-armed Chartist of his youth and the artisan-voter of to-day is a measure of his achievement.

A CONTRIBUTION TOWARDS  
A BIBLIOGRAPHY OF THE WRITINGS OF  
GEORGE JACOB HOLYOAKE.

COMPILED BY C. W. F. GOSS.

THE writings of Mr. George Jacob Holyoake have been the subject of study with the compiler for some two years past, and he had hoped, ere this, to have published the long projected bibliography, which, however, is now in preparation, and will be published in the course of a few weeks, with notes upon such books or pamphlets as may call for special attention. The following chronological list does not pretend to include the various editions of his works, nor does it include broadsheets, leaflets, works edited by Mr. Holyoake or those in criticism of him, to the number of 160 items, all of which may be seen at the Bishopsgate Institute. Only such publications have been mentioned as appeared to be principally deserving of attention. For omissions, therefore, the compiler trusts a kindly view may be taken, and for any information helping him to make the projected bibliography more complete, he will be deeply grateful, for he is anxious that nothing shall be omitted.

1841

The Advantages and disadvantages of Trades' Unions. pp. 12, cr. 8vo.  
Sheffield : Hardcastle. 1d.

1842

A Sketch of the Life and a few of the Beauties of Pemberton. pp. 24,  
cr. 8vo. Leeds : J. Hobson. 3d.  
The Spirit of Bonner in the Disciples of Jesus. pp. 16, cr. 8vo.  
London : Hetherington & Cleave. 2d.

## 1843

- A Short and easy method with the Saints. pp. 28, cr. 8vo.  
London : Hetherington. 4*d*.  
Paley Refuted in his Own Words. pp. 39, cr. 8vo.  
London : Hetherington. 6*d*.

## 1844

- Practical Grammar ; or, composition divested of difficulties. pp. 72, 12mo.  
London : J. Watson. 1*s*. 6*d*.  
A Visit to Harmony Hall. pp. 27, cr. 8vo. London : Hetherington. 2*d*.

## 1845

- The Value of Biography in the formation of Individual Character. pp. 16,  
12mo. London : J. Watson. 2*d*.  
Rationalism : a treatise for the times. pp. 47, cr. 8vo.  
London : J. Watson. 6*d*.

## 1846

- Lecture: used by the Manchester Unity of the Independent Order of  
Oddfellows : Charity, Truth, Knowledge, and Science. pp. 64,  
12mo. London : J. G. Hornblower.  
Purple Lecture used by the Manchester Unity : Progression. pp. 16,  
12mo. London : J. G. Hornblower.  
Handbook of Grammar. pp. 60, 12mo. London : J. Watson. 1*s*.

## 1847

- Mathematics no Mystery ; or, the beauties and uses of Euclid. pp. 121,  
12mo. London : J. Watson. 2*s*. 6*d*.  
Propagandism (from *The Reasoner*). pp. 4, dy. 8vo.  
London : *The Reasoner* Office.

## 1848

- A Logic of facts ; or, plain hints on Reasoning. pp. xii + 92, 12mo.  
London : J. Watson. 1*s*. 6*d*.  
The Polity and resources of Freethinking. pp. 8, dy. 8vo.  
London : *The Reasoner* Office.

## 1849

- Life and character of Richard Carlile. pp. 40, cr. 8vo.  
London : J. Watson. 6*d*.  
Rudiments of Public Speaking and Debate. pp. vii + 90, 12mo.  
London : J. Watson. 1*s*. 6*d*.  
Life and character of Henry Hetherington. pp. 16, roy. 8vo.  
London : J. Watson. 2*d*.  
Literary Institutions : their relation to public opinion. pp. 16, cr. 8vo.  
London : J. Watson. 2*d*.

## 1850

- The Logic of death ; or, why should the Atheist fear to die? pp. 15, 12mo. London : J. Watson. 1*d*.
- History of the last trial by Jury for Atheism in England. pp. vi + 100, 12mo. London : J. Watson. 1*s*. 6*d*.
- Catholicism the religion of fear. pp. 32, 12mo. London : J. Watson. 3*d*.
- The Appeal of the distressed operative tailors to the higher classes and the public. By G. J. Holyoake and R. Leblond. pp. 31, dy. 8vo.
- The Report of the four nights' discussion at Bradford between George J. Holyoake . . . and John Bowes . . . on "The truth of Christianity and the folly of Infidelity." pp. 154, 12mo. London : E. Ward.
- A Report of the public discussion between George J. Holyoake and David King. Questions: "What is the Christian system? what are its legitimate effects?" pp. 72, cr. 8vo. London : W. Horsell.

## 1851

- The Workman and the International Exhibition. pp. 8, 12mo. [London: Holyoake Bros.] 1*d*.
- The Philosophic type of Religion as developed by Professor Newman, stated, examined, and answered. pp. 26, cr. 8vo. London : J. Watson. 3*d*.
- The Last days of Mrs. Emma Martin, advocate of Freethought. pp. 8, 12mo. London : J. Watson. 1*d*.

## 1852

- Report of a public discussion carried on by Henry Townley, late of Bishopsgate Chapel, and George Jacob Holyoake . . . on the question "Is there sufficient proof of the existence of a God?" pp. viii + 82, cr. 8vo. London : Ward & Co. 1*s*.
- The Organisation of Freethinkers. pp. 8, 12mo. London : J. Watson. 1*d*.
- Constitution and objects of Secular Societies from the Manchester Conference Report. pp. 4, dy. 8vo. 1*d*.  
This was issued as a supplement to *The Reasoner*, No. 337, Nov. 10th, 1852.
- Townley and Holyoake, Atheistic controversy: a public discussion on the "Being of a God." pp. 64, 12mo. London : Ward & Co. 6*d*.
- Why do the Clergy avoid discussion, and the Philosophers discountenance it? pp. 43, 12mo. London : J. Watson. 6*d*.  
Forms volume ii of "The Cabinet of Reason."
- Three Lectures in Heywood in answer to Mr. Grubb's Lectures, entitled "Infidelity unmasked." In three parts. pp. 10 + 12 + 12, cr. 8vo. Heywood : A. Whitworth.

## 1852-3

- Wayside points for New Roads; or, defences of Freethinking. No. 1  
November 1852, No. 2 December 1852, No. 3 January 1853.  
pp. 16 + 16 + 16, roy. 8vo. London: J. Watson. 2d. each.

## 1852-4

- The Child's First letter book [6 leaves without pagination], 12mo.  
London: J. Watson, 1852. 1d.  
The Child's Second letter book [8 leaves without pagination], 12mo.  
London: J. Watson, 1852. 2d.  
The Child's First reading book. pp. 32, 12mo.  
London: J. Watson, 1853. 4d.  
The Child's First word book. pp. 20, 12mo.  
London: Holyoake & Co., 1854. 3d.

NOTE.—The four preceding booklets, sewn together, were published *circa* 1864, under the title of "The Child's Ladder of knowledge." pp. 64, cr. 8vo. London: F. Farrah. 8d.

## 1853

- Report of a public discussion between the Rev. Brewin Grant . . . and George Jacob Holyoake, held in the Royal British Institution, Cowper Street, London. pp. viii + 264, cr. 8vo.  
London: Ward & Co. 2s.  
Organisation: not of Arms—but Ideas. pp. viii + 26, cr. 8vo.  
London: J. Watson. 6d.  
Forms volume iii of "The Cabinet of Reason."  
Libra, or, the balances; being a Review of "Mene Tekel." pp. 12, cr. 8vo.  
Stoke-upon-Trent: George Turner.  
The Government and the working man's press. pp. 12, post 8vo.  
Free Press Union. 1d.  
Socialism and its advocates: a letter from Mr. Joseph Barker; with the reply of the Editor of *The Reasoner*. pp. 8, cr. 8vo.  
London: J. Watson. 1d.  
The India and China tea mart: the history of Indian and Chinese teas. pp. 7, cr. 8vo.  
Glasgow: J. & M. Mackenzie.  
Secularism: its sphere and its services. [From *The Reasoner*.] pp. 2, dy. 8vo.  
Correspondence between Mr. George Jacob Holyoake . . . and the Rev. John H. Rutherford. pp. 8, roy. 8vo.  
Newcastle: T. P. Barkas. 1d.

## 1854

- Circular from Mr. Holyoake (for friends of Secular progress only).  
pp. 8, cr. 8vo.

- Secularism the affirmative Philosophy of the people. pp. 16, 12mo.  
London: Holyoake & Co. 1d.
- A Secular catechism for children; adapted from the Rev. H. W. Crosskey's Catechism of religion for the use of young children. pp. 8, cr. 8vo. London: Holyoake & Co. 1d.
- Report of a public discussion between the Rev. Brewin Grant and George Jacob Holyoake, held in the City Hall, Glasgow. pp. xx + 220, 12mo. Glasgow: Robert Stark. 2s.
- Christianity *versus* Secularism: a public discussion at Newcastle-upon-Tyne between the Rev. J. H. Rutherford and Mr. G. J. Holyoake. pp. 170, 12mo. London: Ward & Co. 1s. 3d.
- Controversial characteristics of the Scottish people. pp. 4, 12mo. 1d.
- A Secular prayer by Mr. J. G. Holyoake in Inveriel Church, Kirkcaldy. [From *The Reasoner*. No. 446.]

## 1855

- Ledru Rollin. [From *The Reasoner*, vol. 18, No. 457.] pp. 2, dy. 8vo.
- Secularism distinguished from Unitarianism. pp. 16, cr. 8vo.  
London: Holyoake & Co. 2d.

## 1856

- Public Discussion on Teetotalism and the Maine Law, between George Jacob Holyoake, Esq., and Dr. Frederic R. Lees. pp. 28, dy. 8vo. In works of Dr. Lees, vol. iii, pp. 177-202.  
London: W. Tweedie. 6d.
- Another edition was published at 8d. by Holyoake & Co.
- History of Fleet Street House: a Report of Sixteen Years [1840-1856]. pp. 20, roy. 8vo. London: Holyoake & Co. 6d.
- Rich Man's Six, and Poor Man's One Day: a letter to Lord Palmerston. pp. 8, cr. 8vo. London: Holyoake & Co. 1d.

## 1857

- The Secular preacher (with portrait of the Rev. Thomas Binney). pp. 6, cr. 8vo. London: F. Farrah. 1d.
- British Secular Institute of communication and propagandism: report of the Fleet Street House, part ii for 1857. pp. 8, roy. 8vo.
- The Case of Thomas Pooley, the Cornish well sinker. pp. 32, cr. 8vo. London: Holyoake & Co. 3d.
- The Trial of Theism. pp. 176, cr. 8vo. London: Holyoake & Co. 2s.

NOTE.—Originally published in 22 penny parts, and afterwards in three sixpence-halfpenny sections.

## 1858

- Self-Help by the people: History of Co-operation in Rochdale. pp. 72, cr. 8vo. London: Holyoake & Co. 1s.

Report of a discussion on the Maine Law between Mr. G. J. Holyoake . . . and Mr. G. E. Lomax, in the Theatre Royal, Blackburn, November 16th and 17th, 1857. pp. 40 + 40, cr. 8vo.  
Blackburn : F. J. Nichols.

## 1859

The Workman and the suffrage : letters to the Right Hon. Lord John Russell. pp. 16, roy. 8vo. London : Holyoake & Co. 2d.

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The skin, baths, bathing and soap. pp. vii + 101, cr. 8vo.  
London : The Author.

Principles of Secularism briefly explained. pp. 40, cr. 8vo.  
London : Holyoake and Co. 6d.

The Social means of promoting temperance ; with remarks on errors in its advocacy. pp. 31, cr. 8vo. London : Holyoake & Co. 4d.

## 1860

Lectures and Debates : their terms, condition and character. pp. 8, cr. 8vo. [Privately printed.] London : Holyoake & Co.

On Lecturing : its conditions and character. pp. 2, roy. 8vo.

## 1861

The Logic of life, deduced from the principle of Freethought. pp. 16, cr. 8vo. London : Holyoake & Co. 2d.

Thomas Cooper delineated as convert and controversialist. pp. 20, cr. 8vo. London : Holyoake & Co. 3d.

What may England yet do for Italy? pp. 8, dy. 8vo.  
London : Holyoake & Co.

The Outlaws of Freethought : the policy which may secure an affirmation bill. pp. 6, cr. 8vo. London : Holyoake & Co. 1d.

The Limits of Atheism ; or, why should sceptics be outlaws? pp. 16, cr. 8vo. London : Holyoake & Co. 2d.

The Uselessness of prayer. [Two-page secular tracts, No. 5.] pp. 2, cr. 8vo.

The Impossibility of proving the existence of God by the design argument. [Two-page secular tracts, No. 3.] pp. 2, cr. 8vo.

Secularism and the place it occupies. [Two-page secular tracts, No. 2.] pp. 2, cr. 8vo.

Defeat of the Rev. Sidney Gedge of Northampton in the Queen's Bench. pp. 8, cr. 8vo. London : Holyoake & Co.

In the Matter of the affirmation bill. pp. 4, cr. 8vo.



## 1862

- Affirmation and appeal case fund. pp. 2, cr. 8vo.  
 Freethought Lectureships in connection with *The Secular World*. pp. 4, cr. 8vo.  
 Mr. Holyoake's Disconnection with the *National Reformer*, and the correspondence which accounts for it. pp. 4, cr. 8vo.

## 1863

- The Colenso controversy: a reply to Dr. Cumming's "Moses right, Colenso wrong." By a London Zulu. pp. 60, cr. 8vo.  
 London: F. Farrah. 6d.  
 A "Working Man's" Objections to Co-operative Societies answered. By One who has seen them before. pp. 14, cr. 8vo.  
 Huddersfield: H. Fielding.  
 History of the rise and progress of Middlesbrough. By Landor Praed. pp. 28, dy. 8vo.  
 Newcastle-upon-Tyne: *Chronicle* Office. 6d.  
 Moral Errors which endanger the permanence of Co-operative Societies. pp. 16, cr. 8vo. Huddersfield: H. Fielding. 1d.  
 Civil Equality: the parliamentary progress of the affirmation bill. pp. 8, cr. 8vo.  
 Tracts for the thoughtful. pp. 2, cr. 8vo.  
 London: *Secular World* Office.  
 The Suppressed Princess. By Landor Praed. pp. 8, 4to.  
 London: F. Farrah. 2d.

## 1864

- Imitable features of the Railway Permanent Benefit Building Society, Euston. pp. 8, dy. 8vo. London: McCorquodale & Co. 3d.  
 Public Lessons of the hangman. pp. 8, cr. 8vo.  
 London: F. Farrah. 1d.  
 The Suppressed lecture at Cheltenham. pp. 8, cr. 8vo.  
 London: F. Farrah. 1d.  
 The Perils of Co-operation: the hundred master system. By A Student in Co-operation. pp. 8, 12mo.  
 Reprinted from the *Morning Star*.

## 1865

- Excluded Evidence on the ground of speculative opinion. pp. 16, cr. 8vo.  
 London Book Store. 2d.  
 Partnerships of Industry: a statement of the Co-operative case, divested of sentimentality. pp. 16, cr. 8vo.  
 London Book Store. 2d.  
 The Liberal situation: necessity for a qualified franchise. pp. 36, cr. 8vo.  
 London Book Store. 6d.

- Public performances of the dead : a review of American spiritualism.  
pp. 12, cr. 8vo. London Book Store. 3*d*.

## 1866

- Eclectic Catalogue. January 1866. pp. 16, dy. 8vo.  
London Book Store. 3*d*.

## 1867

- The History of Co-operation in Halifax. pp. 57, cr. 8vo.  
London Book Store. 1*s*.  
The Good of going to Paris to see the exhibition. By Landor Praed.  
pp. 8, cr. 8vo. London Book Store. 1*d*.

## 1868

- Life of the celebrated Lord Brougham. By Landor Praed. pp. 16,  
cr. 8vo. London : F. Farrah. 1*d*.  
Working Class representation : its conditions and consequences. pp.  
16, dy. 8vo. London Book Store. 1*d*. and 2*d*.  
A New defence of the ballot, in consequence of Mr. Mill's objections to  
it. pp. 8, dy. 8vo. London Book Store. 1*d*. and 3*d*.

## 1870

- Secularism, Scepticism and Atheism : verbatim report of the proceed-  
ings of a two nights' Public Debate between Messrs. G. J. Holy-  
oake and C. Bradlaugh, held at the New Hall of Science, March  
10th and 11th, 1870. pp. 77, cr. 8vo. London : Austin and Co.  
Common People. pp. 8, dy. 8vo. London : Trübner and Co. 2*d*.

## 1871

- Protection of inebriates. Reprinted from *The Examiner*, No. 3307.  
pp. 2, 4to.

## 1873

- John Stuart Mill, as some of the working classes knew him. pp. 29,  
cr. 8vo. London : Trübner & Co. 6*d*.  
The Logic of Co-operation. pp. 16, cr. 8vo.  
London : Trübner & Co. 2*d*.  
Secular Responsibility. pp. 15, cr. 8vo. London : Trübner & Co. 2*d*.

## 1874

- In Memoriam, Austin Holyoake, died April 10th, 1874. pp. 8, cr. 8vo.

1875

History of Co-operation in England: its literature and its advocates.  
2 vols., cr. 8vo. 1875-1879.

Vol. 1.—Pioneer period, 1812-1844. pp. xii + 419. 1875.  
London: Trübner & Co. 6s.

Vol. 2.—Constructive period, 1845-1878. pp. x + 491. 1879.  
London: Trübner & Co. 8s.

1877

Alien features of Secularism. pp. 4, cr. 8vo.

Letter to the Subscribers of the Fund made during my recent illness.  
pp. 4, folio.

1878

The Provincial mind. pp. 6, dy. 8vo.

Manchester.

1881

Among the Americans. pp. 246, cr. 8vo.

Chicago: Belford, Clarke & Co. 6s.

NOTE.—Includes "A Stranger in America," reprinted from  
the *Nineteenth Century*.

2nd edition. pp. 79.

London: T. H. Roberts. 1s.

Life of Joseph Rayner Stephens, preacher and political orator. pp. 244,  
cr. 8vo.

London: Williams & Norgate. 3s.

1882

Secularism a religion which gives Heaven no trouble. pp. 15, cr. 8vo.

London: Watts & Co. 2d.

Plain words about Secularism. pp. 4, dy. 8vo. n. d.

A Plea for affirmation in parliament. pp. 20, dy. 8vo.

London: H. Cattell & Co. 2d.

The Revenue of the Central Co-operative Board. pp. 4, 12mo.

Manchester: Central Co-operative Board.

1883

Secular Prospects in death. The late Councillor Josiah Gimson. pp.  
19, cr. 8vo.

London: Crown Publishing Co.

1884

Jurisprudence and amendment of the law. pp. 4, dy. 8vo.

Death of Mrs. G. J. Holyoake, 1819-1884. pp. 4, 4to.

Reprinted from *The Present Day*.

Travels in search of a settler's guide book of America and Canada.  
pp. 148, dy. 8vo.

London: Trübner & Co. 2s. 6d.

Employee interest in Co-operation. Broadsheet. pp. 2, roy. 8vo.

VOL. II.

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## 1885

- Patriotism by charity. pp. 12, cr. 8vo. Leicester Book Store. 1d.  
 Robbing a thousand Peters to pay one Paul. pp. 2, dy. 8vo.  
 London : Cassell & Co. 1s. per 100.  
 Reciprocity explained. pp. 2, dy. 8vo.  
 London : Cassell & Co. 1s. per 100.

## 1886

- Deliberate Liberalism : four instances of it. pp. 16, cr. 8vo.  
 London and Leicester : John Heywood. 1d.  
 The Opportunity of Ireland. pp. 8, cr. 8vo. London : N. L. C. 1d.  
 Hostile and generous toleration (a new theory of toleration). pp. 15,  
 dy. 8vo. London : E. W. Allen. 2d.

## 1887

- Inaugural Address delivered at the Nineteenth Annual Co-operative  
 Congress, held at Carlisle, May 30th and 31st, and June 1st 1887.  
 pp. 15, cr. 8vo. Manchester : Central Co-operative Board. 2d.  
 The Growth of Co-operation in England. pp. 22, cr. 8vo.  
 Manchester : Central Co-operative Board. 2d.  
 New Ideas of the day. pp. 16, cr. 8vo.  
 London : Freethought Publishing Co. 1d.

## 1888

- The Policy of commercial Co-operation as respects the consumer. pp.  
 16, cr. 8vo. London : Trübner & Co. 2d.  
 Self-help a hundred years ago. pp. viii + 214, cr. 8vo.  
 London : Swan Sonnenschein. 2s. 6d.  
 Co-operative Dairy-farming in Denmark. pp. 4, dy. 8vo.  
 London : Cassell & Co. 2s. per 100.

## 1890

- What would follow on the effacement of Christianity. pp. 15, dy. 8vo.  
 Buffalo : Office of *Freethinkers' Magazine*. 10 cents.

## 1891

- Life and career of Charles Bradlaugh. pp. 16, roy. 8vo.  
 New York : H. L. Green. 15 cents.  
 The Co-operative movement to-day. pp. xiii + 198, cr. 8vo.  
 London : Methuen & Co. 2s. 6d.

## 1892

- Sixty Years of an agitator's life. 2 vols. pp. xii + 307 and x + 320,  
 roy. 8vo. London : T. Fisher Unwin. 21s.

1894

Letter from Mr. George Jacob Holyoake to the *Daily News*, April 18th, 1894, on the proposed journal *Labour Co-partnership*. pp. 2, dy. 8vo.

1895

Life of Thomas Burt, M.P., Secretary of the Northumberland Miners' Union. pp. 16, cr. 8vo. London: Walter Scott, Ltd. 1d.

1896

The War path of opinion: strange things seen therein as shown in the "Life of Bradlaugh" and "Memories" of Linton. pp. 74, cr. 8vo. Leicester: Co-operative Printing Society.

NOTE.—This work was written in 1896, but when the sheets were being passed through the press it was withdrawn, and issued in 1901.

Three Articles dealing with the treatment of the musicians by the bandmaster of the West Pier, Brighton. pp. 6, dy. 8vo. Amalgamated Musicians' Union.

Dispute with H. S. Gates. Musical blacklegs in Brighton. pp. 2, cr. 8vo.

The Origin and nature of Secularism. pp. 136, cr. 8vo. London: Watts & Co. 2s. 6d.

*American edition* with title changed to "English Secularism: a confession of belief." pp. xii + 146, cr. 8vo. Chicago: Open Court Publishing Co.

1897

The Jubilee History of the Leeds Industrial Co-operative Society from 1847-1897. pp. xii + 260, cr. 8vo.

Leeds: Central Co-operative Office. 1s. 6d.

1898

Omar Khayyam: strange story of the Macmillans and a Leicester Book-seller. [Cyclostyled.] pp. 12, cr. 8vo.

Leicester: Freethought Bookstore. 1s.

The Essentials of Co-operative education. pp. 19, dy. 8vo. London: Labour Association Central Office. 2d.

1899

Against Clandestine commissions, mainly in the history of Co-operative Societies. pp. 18, dy. 8vo. London: Gay & Bird. 6d.

1900

The Jubilee History of the Derby Co-operative Provident Society, Ltd., 1850-1900. By George Jacob Holyoake and Amos Scotton. pp. vi + 198, cr. 8vo.

Manchester: Co-operative Printing Society. 1s. 3d.

- The two kinds of Co-operation. pp. 2, dy. 8vo.  
Brighton Equitable E. & R. D. Committee.

## 1901

- History of the travelling tax. pp. 16, dy. 8vo. London : A. Bonner.

## 1902

- Robert Owen Co-operative Memorial at Newtown : the unveiling ceremony on July 12th, 1902 ; address by Mr. G. J. Holyoake. pp. 19, dy. 8vo. Manchester : Co-operative Union.  
Robert Owen : the precursor of social progress. In justification of the Newtown memorial. pp. 22, dy. 8vo. Manchester : The Co-operative Union.  
Anti-Boycott papers [10 pamphlets]. pp. 86, dy. 8vo. Manchester : Co-operative Newspaper Society.

## 1903

- Two Great preachers : the Rev. Hugh Price Hughes, the Rev. Dr. Joseph Parker ; or, appreciation distinct from concurrence. pp. 15, cr. 8vo. London : Watts & Co. 3d.

## 1904

- New Party of profit seizers. pp. 8, cr. 8vo. Glasgow : Scottish Co-operative Wholesale Society.

## 1905

- Bygones worth remembering. 2 vols. pp. 295 and 312, roy. 8vo. London : T. Fisher Unwin. 21s.

## PERIODICALS

## 1842

- The Oracle of Reason. 2 vols. pp. 432 and 406, dy. 8vo. 1841-1843-  
(Weekly 1d.)  
Nos. 1-7, Nov. 6th 1841 to Jan. 8th 1842 ; edited by Charles Southwell.  
Nos. 8-36, Feb. 12th 1842 to Aug. 27th 1842 ; edited by G. Jacob Holyoake.  
Nos. 37-85, Sept. 3rd 1842 to July 29th 1843 ; edited by Thomas Paterson.  
Nos. 86-103, Aug. 5th 1843 to Dec. 2nd 1843 ; edited by William Chilton.

## 1843-1845

*The Movement*; edited by G. Jacob Holyoake and M. Q. Ryall. 2 vols. pp. 464 and 116, dy. 8vo. 1843-1845. (Weekly, Nos. 1-67 1½d. No. 68 2d.)

## 1845

*The Circular of the Anti-Persecution Union*; edited by G. Jacob Holyoake. pp. 16, dy. 8vo. 1845. (Monthly, 1d.)

NOTE.—Only 4 numbers were issued.

## 1846-1872

*The Reasoner* [series]; edited by George Jacob Holyoake. 30 vols. Various sizes, from dy. 8vo. to fcap. folio. 1846-1872 :—

*The Reasoner*. June 3rd 1846 to June 30th 1861, Nos. 1-789.

*The Counsellor*. August 1861 to December 1861, Nos. 1-5.

*Secular World*. May 10th 1862 to June 1st 1864; Vol. 1, Nos. 1-19; Vol. 2, Nos. 1-13.

*English Leader*. June 8th 1864 to October 15th 1864, Nos. 1-20.

*Secular World*. December 1st 1864, No. 14.

*The Reasoner*. January 1st 1865 to December 1st 1865, Nos. 828-839.

*English Leader*. January 6th 1866 to July 14th 1866, Nos. 21-48.

*The Reasoner*. November 1st and December 1st 1868, Nos. 888-889.

*The Reasoner*. April and May 1870, Nos. 890-891.

*The Reasoner*. January 1871 to July 1872, Nos. 892-910.

## 1846-1848

*Utilitarian Record* [edited by George Jacob Holyoake]. pp. 1-104 and 1-52, dy. 8vo. 1846-1848.

Issued weekly as a separate leaflet with *The Reasoner*. After the 78th week it formed part of that journal.

## 1848

*The Cause of the People*; edited by W. J. Linton and G. J. Holyoake. pp. 72, folio. 1848. Weekly, 2d.

This ran for 9 weeks only, May 20th 1848 to July 15th 1848.

## 1849

*The Spirit of the Age* [edited by George Jacob Holyoake]. 1848-1849.

## 1850

*People's Review*; edited by George Jacob Holyoake and others. pp. 136, cr. 8vo. 1850. 1s.

Only 3 numbers were issued—February, March and April, 1850.

## 1850-1851

Reasoner Tracts [edited by George Jacob Holyoake]. Nos. 1-58  
[4 pages each]. April 10th 1850 to May 14th 1851. dy. 8vo.

## 1860

Reasoner Gazette ; or, Co-operative and Secular News. Cr. 4to. 1860.  
Issued in 52 4-page numbers, forming supplements to *The Reasoner*  
vol. 25, 1860.

## 1861

The Counsellor, on secular, co-operative and political questions ;  
edited by George Jacob Holyoake. [*Reasoner* series.] August to  
December 1861. Fcap folio. [5 numbers only were issued, 1 $\frac{1}{2}$ d.  
and 2d.]

## 1862-1864

The Secular World and Social Economist ; edited by George Jacob  
Holyoake. [*Reasoner* series.] 2 vols. fcap. folio. 1862-1864.

From May 10th 1862 to July 5th 1862, 9 weekly numbers were  
issued at 2d. ; August 1st 1862 to June 1st 1864, 23 monthly  
numbers at 2d. On June 8th it was succeeded by *The English  
Leader*, issued in 20 numbers until October 15th 1864. On  
December 1st 1864 one number of *The Secular World* was issued  
at 1d., and on January 1st 1865 it became *The Reasoner*. There  
were 33 numbers in all.

## 1864-1866

The English Leader ; edited by George Jacob Holyoake. [*Reasoner*  
series.] Folio. 1864-1866. (Weekly 2d.)

Succeeded the first issue of *The Secular World* on the 8th June  
1864, and continued for 20 weeks until October 19th 1864. It  
was revived on January 6th 1866, but ceased with the 28th  
number on July 14th 1866, being then succeeded by *The  
Reasoner*. There were 48 numbers in all.

## 1866

The Working Man : a weekly record of social and industrial progress.  
2 vols. folio. 1866. (2d.)

There were probably 52 numbers issued, the first appearing on  
January 6th, and the last on December 22nd 1866. The Bishops-  
gate Institute set finishes with No. 24 in vol. 2, 15th December,  
1868.

## 1867-1868

Industrial Partnerships' Record ; edited by E. O. Greening and George  
Jacob Holyoake. Folio. 1867-1868.

This was issued in 12 monthly numbers, March 1867 to February  
1868. Mr. Holyoake was offered the editorship on the 2nd  
January, 1868, and became part proprietor on January 19th 1868.  
In March it was published under the title of *The Social Economist*.



## 1868-1869

Social Economist, Industrial Partnerships' Record and Co-operative Review; edited by E. O. Greening, George Jacob Holyoake, and E. Edger. Folio. (Monthly *ad.*)

Mr. Holyoake was joint editor from March 1868 to and including the August issue in 1869. This journal afterwards became *The Agricultural Economist* so far as it dealt with "One and All" matters, while co-operative matter was incorporated in *The Co-operative News*.

## 1869

The New House Agitator. No. 1000, November 1869. pp. 4, cr. 4to. 1s.  
Only the one number was issued, although numbered 1000.

## 1871

Proceedings of the third Co-operative Congress, 1871; edited by George Jacob Holyoake. pp. 97, super roy. 8vo.

## 1872

Proceedings of the fourth Co-operative Congress, 1872; edited by George Jacob Holyoake. pp. 137, super roy. 8vo.

## 1873

Proceedings of the fifth Co-operative Congress, 1873; edited by George Jacob Holyoake. pp. 133, super roy. 8vo.

## 1876

The Secularist: a liberal weekly review; edited by G. J. Holyoake and G. W. Foote, 1876. (*ad.*)

First issued on January 1st 1876, and Mr. Holyoake severed his connection as joint editor with the February issue.

## 1876-1877

The Secular Review; edited by George Jacob Holyoake. Cr. 4to. 1876-1877. (Weekly *ad.*)

Published weekly from the 6th August 1876 to the 11th February 1877, on which date it was transferred to Mr. Charles Watts. Under the proprietorship and editorship of Mr. Holyoake there were issued 28 numbers, 27 forming volume 1, and one number in volume 2.

## 1878-1880

The Brighton Guardian; edited by George Jacob Holyoake. 1878-1880. Weekly.

## 1883-1886

*The Present Day*: a journal discussing agitated questions without agitation; edited by George Jacob Holyoake. 3 vols. imp. 8vo. 1883-1886. (Monthly 2d.)

NOTE.—There were 36 issues in all, June 1883 to May 1886, in which month it was transferred to Mr. Thomas Barrett, who issued only 4 numbers—June, July, August and September issued as one number, and October.

## 1889

*The Universal Republic*. pp. 8, roy. 8vo. January 1889. (2d.)  
Only one number issued.

## 1892

*The Liberty of Bequest Intelligencer*. No. 1, January 1892. pp. 8, sm. 4to.  
One issue only.

## CONTRIBUTIONS

*The Herald of Progress*; edited by John Cramp. Imp. 8vo. 1845-1846.  
(Fortnightly 1d.)

NOTE.—Mr. Holyoake contributed to this journal from its beginning on the 25th October 1845 until the end on the 23rd May 1846. There were 16 numbers in all. This periodical was subsequently incorporated in *The Reasoner*.

*The Leader*. 1850-1853. (Weekly 6d.)

Mr. Holyoake was associated with *The Leader* from the beginning to the end of the journal.

*National Reformer*. 1862.

Mr. Holyoake contributed from January to April 1862.

*The Index* (Boston). 1876.

Mr. Holyoake was one of six editorial contributors.

*The Voice* (New York).

Mr. Holyoake was a weekly contributor in 1892.

*Agricultural Economist*; edited by E. O. Greening.

Mr. Holyoake contributed to this journal until 1905.

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